TRAITS OF NATURE,

BY

MISS BURNEY.

SECOND EDITION, IN FOUR VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

527

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AUTHOR OF

CLARENTINE, GERALDINE FAUCONBERG, &c.

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Le triomphe de la raison, c'est de bien vivre avec ceux qui n'en ont pas.—VOLTAIRE.

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TRAITS OF NATURE.

CHAPTER I.

ENCOURAGEMENT.

SUPPORTED by the presence of her uncle, Adela, though anticipating a reserved, perhaps a supercilious reception, felt oppressed by no peculiar timidity: but, armed to endure a rebuff without shrinking, she entered the drawing-room with as composed an aspect, as if she had been going into an apartment she was assured of finding empty.

"Mrs. Cleveland," said the General, placing Laura on the ground as soon as he had stepped a few paces within the room, "I have brought you two good girls, a daughter and a niece, who are both anxious to ask you how you do.—This," continued he, taking the hand of his young guest, and leading her close up to the table, "is Adela Cleveland. Receive her kindly; and till you have learnt to love her for her own sake, endeavour to love her for that of her family."

The coffee-cup which Mrs. Cleveland held, almost dropped from her hand, so infinite was her astonishment on surveying the striking and dignified figure now presented to her view. Adela was tall, but feminine and graceful in a very remarkable degree. The resemblance to her brother, which, at first sight, could not but be apparent to every beholder, was a resemblance more of features than of countenance; she had an eye expressive of deeper reflection; a demeanour more collected, than, even in his most rational moments, Julius could boast. However unassuming, she was one, at whose approach strangers would involuntarily have made way; and whom, even in an unprotected situation, it would have been difficult to attain the courage to insult. Placid, yet commanding, her aspect denoted a character the most liberal, an understanding the most improved, and was not less calculated to encourage benevolence, than to challenge respect.

Amazed, and almost too much confounded to be capable of concealing it, Mrs. Cleveland, at the same time that she

was unconsciously betrayed into evincing some symptoms of good breeding, addressed Adela in a tone the most formal and chilling. She had been prepared to behold considerable beauty, and could have borne the blaze of sparkling eyes and youthful bloom with decent temper: but the native elegance, the look of unaffected self-possession which her niece exhibited, she had not the generosity to view with the smallest patience. Her unfounded disdain of the rural paragon, vanished, indeed, at the first glance; but was succeeded, on behalf of her own daughters, by a jealousy the most inveterate of so dangerous a competitor.

Adela, meanwhile, very feebly surprised, and scarcely at all disappointed at the ceremonious welcome which she had obtained, bore it with perfect tranquillity; and rather rejoiced, that no hypocritical attempt had been made to greet her with less open dislike. She had not indulged the slightest hope of being regarded with favour: but felt grateful to have been spared any manifestation of contempt: and was candid enough, even at the very moment of so repulsive a reception, to distinguish and ad-

mire the traces of eminent beauty still visible in the face and figure of her unconciliating hostess.

With no such temptation to approve, could she afterwards direct her eyes towards her former associate, the unaltered Barbara; between whom and herself, a presentation less formal, but equally cool, now took place. Even youth, and a considerable degree of understanding,—misapplied, indeed, and unaccompanied by either judgment or diffidence—had no power to disarm the criticisms which her personal disadvantages called forth. So much self-sufficiency was impressed on her countenance; her voice was so singularly harsh and dissonant; and her manners were compounded of such insufferable affectation, grafted on such undisguised haughtiness, that whoever knew her, spoke of her with confirmed aversion, or the severest ridicule.

General Cleveland remained in the room but a short time after the introduction of his niece; and either was, or chose to appear, insensible of the forbidding manner in which she had been received. Previous to his exit, he said to his lady—

"You will remember your promise to make this good girl a little acquainted with the London world? I recommend her to your care."

Mrs. Cleveland condescended to bow as she sat; and the General, bestowing a parting smile upon the youthful traveller, disappeared.

Adela had been followed, on her entrance into the apartment, by a favourite spaniel belonging to her uncle, towards whom, as a profound silence for some time succeeded his departure, she now directed her chief attention. As she was conscious of the rigid scrutiny which she was herself undergoing, she deemed it a fortunate circumstance, that any object presented itself on which she could bestow her notice.

"Surely," thought Mrs Cleveland, during the contemplative survey in which she indulged herself of Adela's face and form, "surely the laughing graces of my sportive Jemima will far outweigh the attractions of this extraordinary girl! She looks too sensible, too discriminating for our present race of young men: she has a native loftiness of port, an air of calm superiority which will

repel and overawe them. Admired she will doubtless be; but feared too we shall behold her, and, consequently, obnoxious to a thousand sarcasms, which my flighty, but insinuating little Hebe, without half her real beauty, will escape."

This conclusion, for the present, in some degree, set her mind at rest, and she was beginning to address to Adela a few civil enquiries on the subject of her journey, when perceiving Christina standing near a window, she peevishly exclaimed—

"What are you doing down here, child? Have you no lessons to set about in the school-room?"

"I have no one to do my lessons with, mamma; my new governess is ill in bed."

"And at your age, are you incapable of sitting down to write a copy, or to learn a verb without a governess at your side? For shame! I hate to see you loitering about in these apartments; it has a shocking, neglected, vulgar look, when visitors come in."

"But, mamma, what do you most wish me to set about? Must I write, or read, or practise, or draw, or dance to my own singing?"

"Don't be pert, Miss Christy! Your own singing is an excellent match for your own dancing; I question whether either the one or the other will ever be fit for any higher preferment. But go and chuse your occupation; I hardly care what it is;—only, don't remain here, crawling from one window to the other, and perpetually thrusting yourself in my way. If your new governess is not well enough to begin her task with you to-morrow, I shall enquire for somebody else. There, make haste and leave these rooms."

The mortified little girl unwillingly obeyed this peremptory command; and Adela, when she saw her depart, felt sorry not to accompany her.

"What are your plans for this morning, Barbara?" said Mrs. Cleveland, to her eldest daughter.

"I have three masters coming, ma'am; I expect one of them directly, and the other two will engage me till four o'clock."

"Have you any inclination, when they are all gone, to drive to a few shops with Miss Cleveland and me?"

"None in the world, ma'am; I hate all those sort of places."

"Well, then, I shall order the carriage at three. Miss Cleveland, you will have the goodness to be in readiness at that time?"

Adela bowed; and Miss Barbara's singing-master being announced, that young lady retired into another room to take her lesson.

When she was gone, Mrs. Cleveland having ordered away the breakfast equipage, and consigned Laura to the care of her nurse, sat down before a beautiful little inlaid writing-desk, to answer some notes.

"I suppose, Miss Cleveland," said she to Adela, whilst trying her pen, "you are no jot behind hand, with the rest of our modern misses, in the variety and extent of your accomplishments? You are a great musician, I presume?"

"An inoffensive one, at least, ma'am; for I never play before company."

"What is the talent upon which you most pique yourself?"

"I am perfectly aware, that, in London,

where so many must surpass me, I have no title to pique myself upon any."

"Thank heaven! Then I shall not be condemned to the horrible annoyance of hearing you and Barbara struggling for pre-eminence in shrill singing; or whilst she is stunning me with the noise of a grand piano-forte in one room, have to endure the ceaseless twanging of a harp in the next!"

Adela laughingly assured her, that she had neither of these evils to fear; and then, seeing her preparing to write, she thought the moment favourable to steal quietly away.

But though glad to escape from the frigid lady of the house, it was no easy matter to know where to go. Without forming some regular and independent plan of morning occupation, she foresaw that her present abode would soon become insufferable: yet, so dark and uninviting was her own apartment, that it was the last place to which she could feel any wish of repairing; and where else to go, without being an intruder, she was wholly ignorant. However, for the present, she resolved to descend to the room in which she had break-

fasted: and thither, whilst she was looking over the newspaper, a servant, who had seen her come down, presently ushered in her brother.

"Well, Adela," cried he, "how do you find yourself in this land of uncles, aunts, and cousins? Have they been civil to you? Did you like your reception? And do you think you shall like *them*?"

"My reception was pretty much such as I expected: my uncle was kind and cordial; the ladies somewhat more reserved. But if I had any thing to do, or any where to sit, without being in Mrs. Cleveland's way, I should be perfectly contented."

"Have you no dressing-room, then?"

Adela, half-smiling, shook her head; and Julius, but little concerned for her domestic comforts, proceeded to enquire what Mrs. Cleveland meant to do with her in the evening?

"I have not heard; nor can I at all guess what are her plans in that respect. She has signified to me her intention of taking me out in the carriage at three o'clock."

"Prodigiously condescending! But where is she?—In the back drawing-room?—

Come, come up with me, and you shall hear a specimen of the cavalier style in which it is most politic to treat all such stately dames. She will be ten times more civil to *you*, if I am a little impertinent to *her!*"

He then, almost forcibly, drew Adela's arm within his own, and insisted upon her accompanying him up stairs.

The whole way they proceeded, the piercing tones of Barbara's voice, as she pursued her singing lesson, assailed their ears.

"How infinitely I should prefer," said Julius, "if, of two evils, I was forced to chuse the least, the screams of a butchered pig under my window, whose ham and bacon should supply my table, to the wholly unprofitable screams of our equally un-tuneable cousin!"

On entering the room in which sat Mrs. Cleveland—

"Well, my dear aunt," cried he, "my sister tells me you are going out at three o'clock, so I came up to ask you how you do, and to enquire what your schemes are for this evening. Are you going to Lady

Wilbrooke's assembly, or to Mrs. Sulivan's ball?"

"No; we have not had cards for either; and, to own the truth, we were out so late last night, that I shall be heartily glad not to stir this evening."

"Have you any party at home?"

"None at all."

"Well, then, I will beat up for a few recruits to come and enliven your fire-side. Whom shall I send to you? Has Barbara never a spruce little lover who would be glad to catch at this quiet disengaged opportunity of paying his court? Adela, as yet, we know, can have made no London conquests: but I will pick up some pretty agreeable spark or other, whom it must be her business to send home with the heart-ache, and to fix permanently in her chains."

"You seem persuaded," said Mrs. Cleveland, dryly, "that your sister is come to town with vehement intentions of coquetry and dissipation!"

"To be sure, my dear madam! Did you ever yet know a handsome girl, who, on first arriving in London, wished to spend her evenings, mum-chance, with a jaded,

sleepy, family party? Does Jemima, when she is at home, often suffer you to condemn her to do such penance?—By the way, where is Talbot? Though he is only a cousin, he would do for a flirt, Adela, very tolerably, till you get a better."

"I am not entirely certain," said Mrs. Cleveland, less and less pleased at the turn of this conversation, "that Talbot is quite of a disposition so prone to flirting as you would give me to understand might be wished!"

"Oh, there, my dear aunt, I can assure you that you are entirely mistaken! When Adela was a little creature, not older than Christina, Talbot was so enamoured of her, that it almost broke his heart to be obliged to leave her: and I dare say, that every evening which you devote to retirement and home delights, he will be enchanted to renew his early homage at her shrine. I shall make it a point to find him out, if he is above ground, and to let him know what a treat awaits him to-night in your drawing-room!"

"What a very great pity it is, my dear

nephew, that no one can be found out, who either can, or will, exercise any controul over that wild and rattling tongue of yours!"

"I know not any one who has taken such unwearied pains to effect that business as yourself, my kind aunt. I am sorry you find me so totally incorrigible. Hang up the rod, however, for the present, and in return for the pains I am now going to take in the family service — for, remember, I shall try and enlist a lover for Barbara as well as my sister—wish me a friendly good morning."

He then, disregarding her reluctance, shook Mrs. Cleveland gayly by the hand; nodded to Adela, and departed.

Adela, whilst this dialogue was passing, at which she could by no means suppress a secret smile, had drawn a chair towards a work-frame standing near a window, and employed herself in going on with the pattern she there saw begun. Mrs. Cleveland, when they were again left to themselves, thanked her for the trouble she was taking; gave her some directions about the silks she was to use, and without alluding to the

conversation in which she had been engaged, resumed her pen.

The arrival of some morning visitors, gave the first interruption to the mutual silence the two ladies observed. Adela, indeed, after the entrance of the company, remained as taciturn as ever: but Mrs. Cleveland became voluble, and in some degree, entertaining: yet a spirit of detraction characterized almost every observation she made, which miserably deducted from the pleasure that a good-natured auditor might otherwise have derived from her powers of conversation.

These guests being gone, and the carriage announced, Adela, receiving a hint to get ready, ran up stairs to equip herself, and then accompanied her aunt to her showy vehicle.

They drove first to a milliner's; and as they proceeded, Mrs. Cleveland said, that she had determined on going, after an early dinner, to fetch home her daughter Jemima from Hampton.

"And yesterday," added she, "we had the offer made us of places for to-night, in a private box at the play. Perhaps you

would like to go? Barbara, it is very probable, may not chuse it: but Christina will be enchanted if I give her permission to be of the party; and you would both be perfectly safe under the protection of the lady to whom the box belongs."

"I do not know any scheme," said Adela, "that would give me greater pleasure. I have long wished to see a play performed in London."

"Then, whilst we are at the milliner's, I will send a servant to Lady Dunbar, the proprietor of the box in question, to say that two of our family, at least, will be happy to accept her offer."

This point being arranged, very little more was said till they arrived at their place of destination.

The milliner's door was thronged with carriages, and her apartments were crowded with fashionable and elegant women. Mrs. Cleveland's entrance, however, failed not to obtain due attention from the simpering mistress of the house, and her obsequious assistant damsels. The new visitor paraded through the rooms with the grave deliberating air of a general officer, reviewing his

troops: and on her insinuating, at last, that her purpose in coming, was to bespeak court-dresses for herself and one of her daughters, such a quantity of patterns were produced, so many colours described, and such innumerable compliments paid to her well-known taste, that Adela wondered she was not too much confused to distinguish one piece of finery from another. But, seated in state upon a sofa, Mrs. Cleveland listened to these adulations with affected indifference, yet internal complacency; decided aloud upon the merits of the various silks, laces, and trimmings proposed; and seemed to enjoy her fancied pre-eminence with all the mock dignity of a theatrical queen.

Meanwhile Adela, though soon fatigued by her aunt's fastidious indecision, was amused by the novelty of the general scene, and by the different groups assembled in the rooms. She civilly, yet perhaps, not without some secret regret, told the young attendants, who were perpetually coming forward with some new temptation in their hand, that, as it was not her present intention to make any purchase, she begged

they would give themselves no trouble about her. Indeed, she knew not that she had any right to supply the deficiencies of her attire at so expensive a repository; and prudently declined every solicitation to "see how she would look" in any of the pretty decorations which they chose to bring before her.

Amongst those, who, opportunely for her fortitude, assisted most powerfully in drawing off her attention from the forbidden finery, was a lady standing before a large looking-glass, trying on a succession of hats, caps, and bonnets. She was young, and very beautiful; dressed in elegant and becoming mourning, and smiling, playful, and whimsical as a spoiled child, who has wit enough, however, to laugh at its own folly. Head-dresses, which seen upon the hand, appeared preposterously fantastical, or even ugly, placed carelessly over her luxuriant hair, acquired power to please, and produced a graceful effect. She alone was dissatisfied: the friend who accompanied her; the young shop-women, officiously supplying her with fresh food for experiment, vainly endeavoured to prove how inimitably all shapes and all colours were

suited to her countenance and complexion. She shrugged; made a thousand comic grimaces; inveighed against the fashions of the year; threatened to become her own milliner; and in conclusion, "because they were the least frightful," ordered home three of the most costly things in the house.

These coquettish airs, however wearisome they might be to those who were compelled to humour them, afforded Adela so much amusement, that she knew not how to look away a moment. But becoming sensible, at length, that the brilliant eyes of the capricious beauty were frequently directed towards her, she rejoined her aunt, and only permitted herself to pursue her observations at a distance.

The important affair of the court-dresses being now adjusted, Mrs. Cleveland arose to depart. As she passed from the upper end of the room towards the door, her eyes accidentally rested upon the fair object of Adela's admiration. A gracious and most insinuating smile took possession of her features, and she was beginning to speak, when, either through inadvertency

or design, the youthful lady, turning abruptly from her, snatched up a lace veil from a table at some distance, and asked the milliner its price.

Mrs. Cleveland was struck dumb by this apparently marked instance of disrespect. She drew her head, always erect, to a prouder height than ever; and even through the deep-coloured rouge with which her cheeks were overspread, a flush of extreme anger became obvious to every eye. Some simpered, others wondered, and all shrunk back to leave the path she was pursuing unobstructed.

On re-ascending the carriage, Adela felt no surprise, that after such an affront to her pride, her incensed companion seemed determined not to utter a syllable. The coachman was ordered to drive immediately home; and the two ladies separating the moment it was in their power, Adela went up to dress for the early dinner projected on account of the play, and Mrs. Cleveland bent her thoughtful steps towards her own apartment.

Christina, soon after the return of her new friend, tapped at her door, and being immedi-

ately admitted, began, in the highest spirits, to relate, that her mother had just sent to inform her, that she was to enjoy the indulgence of being permitted to go to the play.

"And only think, my dear cousin, it is Shakespeare's King Henry the Fourth; the very play I have been dying to see ever since I heard a gentleman who dined here, describe the effect it produced upon him when he first read it! Do tell me, cousin, what has put mamma into such good-humour, as to induce her to let me be of your party? Where have you and she been?"

"Only at a milliner's; and I know not that any thing occurred there, remarkably to delight her."

"Did you buy any thing pretty?"

"No, my dear Christina; I am not rich enough to buy pretty things at so extravagant a place."

"And did not mamma make you any present?"

"I had no wish that she should."

"Ah, well—I'll tell you what; if ever I am a married woman, I am determined not to take any young and single relations to

the most tempting places in London, and let them come away as empty-handed as they went in!"

Adela now enquired how the poor governess was going on.

"Much the same, I believe," answered Christina, "but I have not heard very lately, for sister Barbara has been employing me almost ever since you went out, in cleaning for her the glasses of a telescope which she has had carried up into one of the maids' fusty garrets, and through which she means every night to amuse herself in gazing at the stars. What a pity this fancy did not take her whilst the last comet was still visible! It would have been sure to look mighty bright, seen through the smoke of a thousand surrounding chimneys! And so, for that matter, will the stars. But this is the least part of the evil. The poor maids, justly enough, I believe, imagine that she means to pursue her observations with the window open, after they are in bed; and they are sneezing already at the mere idea. And I should not wonder at all if, in defiance of vulgar prejudices, she was to appoint her astronomy-master to give his lessons up in

the same garret at twelve o'clock at night. Poor Jenny and Betty, and Nelly and Peggy! How they would stare and bless themselves."

"And very well they might!" cried the laughing Adela. "I shall now begin to be extremely thankful that the prospect of the heavens from my window is so securely blocked up by the opposite wall! But how is it that your sister finds time to accommodate these scientific speculations with the dissipations of a London life, and the pursuit of lighter accomplishments—such as singing, playing on the piano-forte, dancing, and probably many others?"

"Shall I confess the treasonable thoughts I have had upon this subject?" said Christina, looking very droll; "my notion is—but don't betray me, dear cousin—that Barbara's pretensions to science are all a juggle! Nobody has hitherto presumed to question her very closely, and she talks so confidently, that her superiority is taken for granted. Half the folks she meets with are, like mamma and Jemima, frightened at her hard words, and because she puzzles them, they give her credit for being the

prodigy of the age. But I don't believe in the tenth part of these marvellous acquirements; and one reason for my incredulity is, that she has never been able, when I have asked her to give me an easy explanation of any of the learned terms she has used, to make me understand one syllable she has uttered, without having recourse to a Dictionary or a Cyclopædia, by which I might have cleared the obscurity much better than by applying to her at all."

"My dear Christina," said Adela, "you should remember that it has always been deemed a task of extreme difficulty, to communicate knowledge, in easy, explicit terms, to the ignorant and unprepared. Definitions, which, to you and me, would appear so hard to comprehend, that we should stumble at the very threshold, and require to have even the *explanations explained*, might, to the person who uses them, appear as simple and familiar, as the commonest words repeated in daily conversation."

"Well, dear cousin, you are an excellent advocate, though, I believe, in a lame cause. I would not give sixpence for that know-

ledge, which, having been obtained in the vulgar tongue, wraps itself up, after a little while, in such a cloud of pedantic jargon, that it loses the power of being understood by any thing short of a witch or a conjurer! But, now, let us talk again about the play. Do you know that Barbara was highly affronted at mamma's deciding for her that she would not like to go? And so, she has determined, from the mere love of contradiction, and by way of proving her independence, to honour us with her company. I wish my brother knew of our scheme; I am sure he would accompany us; but he is gone to some place, ten or fifteen miles out of town, to see a grand boxing-match. I wonder, humane as he is, he can bear such a disgusting, savage exhibition. But I dare say, that those noisy men who dined here yesterday, drew him into the excursion, almost whether he would or no."

Adela was now ready, and hearing Mrs. Cleveland go down, she immediately lescended likewise; and soon after, dinner was announced.

Whilst they were taking their places at

table, the General, who had an engagement somewhere else, returned home to dress. He looked in upon them a moment; asked Adela, with great kindness, how she had spent her morning? enquired after his son, whose absence he did not till then seem apprised of; said their soup smelt excellent, wished them a good appetite, and disappeared.

Mrs. Cleveland, by no means recovered from the disturbance which her temper had undergone at the milliner's, threw a damp over the spirits of all who remained, throughout the whole meal; Barbara, and her young sister, who this day was allowed to dine below stairs, regarded their mother with evident surprise; but so little was the former accustomed to take an interest in Mrs. Cleveland's feelings; and so ill, the latter was persuaded, would any interrogations have been borne from her, that neither the one nor the other chose to seem otherwise sensible of her solemnity, than by observing a silence nearly as strict as her own.

At length, the General's chariot drove to the door, which, as his lady wanted her

own coach, she had ordered to convey the young party to the house of Lady Dunbar. The taciturn trio alertly started up—flew for their gloves and fans, and taking a hasty leave of Mrs. Cleveland, were speeding through the hall to the street door, when the General came forth from his dressing-room—

"Where are you all going, my good girls?" enquired he.

Barbara told him.

"But how came you," resumed he, "to order my carriage? I am going out to dinner, and it rains so hard I shall never be able to get a hackney-coach."

"Mamma is going in hers to fetch Jemima."

He was silent a few seconds, as if deliberating how to settle the point; and then, with the greatest good-humour said—

"Well, get in, get in, and I must take Christina on my lap. The coachman shall set you down at Lady Dunbar's, before he proceeds with me to my place of engagement."

Adela knew not whether most to love or admire the sweetness of temper that in-

duced him thus cheerfully to submit to a usurpation so few men would have borne. Even Mr. Somerville, good-natured and indulgent as he was, she very much suspected had been too long accustomed to a complying wife, not to have rebelled under similar circumstances.

At Sir James Dunbar's door already stood in waiting, a solidly-built, and spacious family coach: the punctual owners were both in readiness to enter it, and sending word to the young ladies that they had better step from one carriage to the other without losing more time by alighting, they came down themselves as soon as the manœuvre was performed; and whilst the General's light vehicle drove off, joined their fair charges, and rolled heavily away.

The baronet and his wife were well acquainted with the two sisters, but to Adela, of course, were utter strangers; it fell therefore to the lot of Barbara to introduce her, and she experienced from the worthy Caledonian pair a reception unostentatiously polite.

Nothing but the delight of the animated little Christina could exceed the pleasure

with which Adela attended to every scene of the play. The cold indifference, whether affected or real, of Barbara, gave her no molestation, for she resolutely forbore remarking it; the heavy comments of Sir James Dunbar, she equally closed her ears against; and the drowsy apathy of his lady, after being once shocked by a casual view of it, she determined neither to look at, nor think of again. Whenever Hotspur came on the stage, her memory recurred to his wretched little namesake in Devonshire; and the more strikingly his spirited, enterprizing, and impetuous character was displayed, the more ludicrous appeared to her so unfortunate a misnomer.

The play being over, it was deliberated amongst the party, whether it would be worth while to stay the entertainment, or whether, as they had but one gentleman, it would not be better to get away before the house began to empty. Barbara voted for their immediate departure; Adela felt half desirous to stay, but modestly held back from giving any opinion; Lady Dunbar hearing the after-piece was founded on a Scottish story, was well disposed to unclose

her eyes, and keep her seat; and Christina was most earnest in her solicitations to remain.

"And if we want another gentleman to take care of us to the carriage," cried she, "I have just espied one, who will, I dare say, be proud of the office. Yonder stands Sir Patrick Harley, in a box almost by himself, looking as if it would be charity to give him something to do. The first time he turns his head, I will beckon him this way: and see whether he does not come with all the alertness of the 'feathered mercury,' we have been hearing of in the play."

"Gude troth, my sprightly lassie," cried Sir James, "I doubt whether the worthy baronet have much more alacrity in performing the tricks of a winged mercury than myself! He has a'ways been notorious for deliberation, and is not now vary remarkable for the slenderness of his bulk."

"Oh, but do you imagine, Sir James, that when summoned by a lady, he would be so ungallant as to mind the trifling inconvenience of being obliged to puff a little for breath in order to obey her? Now ob-

serve—I have caught his eye, and made him a signal to come up. You perceive he has left his box, and, my life for it, he is already on his way to us."

Christina was right. Her mother's "old cousin," as she called Sir Patrick, had seen Adela placed beside her, and lost no time in seeking a second, and nearer view of a face which, on the preceding evening, had struck him as being every way so deserving observation.

The unruly gaiety of Christina, on the entrance into their box of this docile personage, totally surpassed whatever Adela had hitherto believed it possible that she would indulge. But Christina, unmindful of her serious looks; callous to the petulant remonstrances of her sister; amused by the expression of surprise in the countenance of Lady Dunbar, and encouraged by the laughter and applause of Sir James, gave such unbounded scope to her spirits, was so noisy and so voluble, that several persons in the adjoining boxes leaned forward to look at her; and the people in the pit, highly incensed at the disturbance, at length began to hiss!

"Ah, troth, my bonny maid," cried Lady Dunbar, now somewhat seriously molested, "this uproar, in such a place, will never do! You must either command your wild glee, or we must all gae hame! The audience grows angry, and to their hisses, may soon, perhaps, add some vary sorry sort of benison!"

"Their hisses?" repeated Adela, exceedingly shocked: "Are they then directed against *us*?"

"Cannot you ken that, lady? Look but down at the folks underneath, and see how every face is turned up to gloom at all our perty!"

"My dearest Christina," cried Adela, with great earnestness, "will not the shame of having called forth such public disapprobation, induce you to be quiet?"

Christina drew back from the front of the box, more disconcerted than she chose to avow, and in a tone of voice considerably moderated, said,

"I may have been a little disorderly, but why do the nasty ill-natured people make such a fuss about it? Can't they regale their stupid eyes with what is going on

upon the stage, without exacting from the people in the boxes so profound a silence? The actors are saying nothing worth listening to; they are only skipping about to that old droning bag-pipe at the corner of the scene. However, if I have been rather too turbulent, it's all Sir Patrick's fault!"

"My fault?" cried the amazed Baronet, —"Why what temptation can *I* have given you to make such a riot? I have scarcely spoken a word since I came in!"

"There is no denying that!—But, pray, since you have nothing to say now you *are* come, what induced you to take the intolerable trouble of clambering up so many stairs to get at us?"

With unmoved gravity, Sir Patrick answered,

"I saw you beckoning to me, and I came on that account."

"No, you did not, my very plausible and dear cousin! You came because you wanted a better view of a prospect there were some hindrances down stairs to your surveying so conveniently as you wished! And the unalterable solemnity with which you have leisurely indulged your fancy, is

what irresistibly provoked me to so much mirth!"

The conscious Baronet, who saw her glance her eyes towards Adela during this speech, affected a degree of facetiousness which ill accorded with the native dullness of his character, and said,

"There may be some truth in what you suggest. But why should my silent and earnest attention to the beauty of the prospect in question, move you to laughter? Do you not know, that great admiration is always of a serious, thoughtful, character?"

"In a Dutchman or an oyster!" flippantly retorted Christina: "But in all other living creatures, I thought it had been a feeling of some animation!"

Sir James Dunbar, forgetful of the ill consequences of the preceding vociferation in their box, burst into so loud a laugh at this pert sally, that his lady, Adela, and Barbara started up at the same instant, and declared they would go away immediately. Christina intreated them to remember that their being obliged to depart, was owing to no new indiscretion of hers: and the box door being opened by Lady Dunbar, she

unceremoniously took hold of her husband's arm, leaving her youthful companions to dispose of their sole remaining beau to the best advantage they could.

Sir Patrick, standing on one side the door-way whilst the three ladies quitted the box, scarcely gave Adela time to step into the lobby, before he abruptly presented to her his arm to lean upon. She hesitated a moment whether to accept a civility so clownishly offered: but meeting the arch eyes of Christina, and dreading some comment on her refusal, she availed herself of his assistance as silently as it was tendered; and followed Sir James and Lady Dunbar to the waiting-room. From thence, Sir James, having carefully buttoned up his coat, tied a silk handkerchief round his throat, and drawn on a pair of warm gloves, sallied forth to enquire after the carriage.

Sir Patrick now suffered Adela, without opposition, to relinquish his arm, and took his stand immediately fronting her, in order to rivet his prominent dull eyes full upon her face.

"My dear cousin," whispered Christina, "you are making sad havoc in poor Sir

Patrick's heart!—Now don't look so very discouragingly grave about it!—I assure you, he does not suspect himself of being rude:—he never *means* to be rude, except to the lady of the house, when disappointed of a good dinner. If you were not undoubtedly very handsome, he would not take the trouble of looking at you an instant. He is a celebrated critic in beauty, and his sanction is reckoned a great feather in a lady's cap."

"He will make me, then," cried Adela, half laughing, "hate feathers as long as I live!"

The entrance into the room of a fresh party now diverted Christina's attention from Sir Patrick, and induced her to break off the dialogue. To her glad surprise, one of the first faces her eyes glanced upon in this new group was that of her brother Talbot. A lady whom he was conducting to her carriage, leaned upon his arm; and in this lady, Adela instantly recognized the fastidious young beauty she had seen in the morning at the milliner's. She beheld her again with the same prepossession which her uncommon loveliness had at first ex-

cited; and her eyes were involuntarily fixed upon her countenance, when, in her turn, she beheld herself pointed out by the lady to Talbot, of whom she seemed to be enquiring whether he knew her. Talbot, being engaged in conversation, had, till that moment, entirely overlooked the whole party; but as soon as he perceived Adela, knowing her again instantly, though an interval of three or four years had elapsed since he had last seen her, it was not without an evident and painful struggle, he forbore quitting the lady under his protection, to hasten to her side. Christina, whom nothing could escape, discerned the conflict in his mind, and laughing as she watched his reluctant departure:

"Whoever," cried she, "is the fair object my brother is escorting, she has little reason to pride herself on the willingness of his attendance. I think I never saw a more ungracious servitor!"

"Do you know," said Adela, "who the lady is?"

"No, my dear cousin, for I am only allowed to go out once or twice in a season,

and very seldom permitted to be in the room when mamma sees company. But ask sister Barbara."

Barbara was accordingly applied to; she had retired, however, to a seat apart from her companions, and affecting utter contempt of every thing around her, seemed wrapt in profound contemplation, and totally insensible even that her brother had passed through the room.

"Are you solving a problem, sister Barbara," cried Christina, "or studying the most becoming attitude for a picture of the Muse of Astronomy?"

Barbara deigned no answer, but waved her hand for Christina to leave her.

"Heyday! what is the matter now? You are more in heroics, my poor sister, than ever! But do tell me honestly, is it not a shocking pun'shment to you, to put on all this abstraction, and to sit, by way of looking sublime, humdrum in a corner without speaking a word, or raising your eyes from the carpet? Amongst all the masters you employ, what a pity it is, you can find none who knows how to teach you the art of being, at once, merry and wise!"

"Should he not give *you* lessons also?" said Adela, significantly.

"Why, perhaps, it might be as well he should. And which of the sisters do you think, would be his aptest scholar? The one who required to learn how to be merry and unaffected? or she who wanted to be taught how to be merry and circumspect?"

Christina, though harshly treated by her mother, knew, that in fact, her eldest sister was very little more an object of affection. Mrs. Cleveland had renounced over Barbara all controul, and ceased all remonstrance; but less from confidence in her ability to avoid incurring ridicule, than from hopeless disgust at her stubborn presumption. Of Christina, though dissatisfied with her exterior, she entertained, upon the whole, a far better opinion; she observed in her a warmer heart, brighter natural perceptions, and infinitely greater pliability of temper. Unwilling, therefore, as she was, to take sides with either, yet, if a dispute between them was at any time referred to her arbitration, she invariably decided in favour of the youngest, assigning for it as a reason, that though *both*

might be wrong, yet, where common sense was concerned, not even a child in leading-strings could be so egregiously wrong as her unfortunate Barbara. Christina was aware of this; and that she did not usually behave with greater rather than less impertinence to Barbara, proceeded more from the generosity of her own disposition, than from the smallest doubt of complete impunity.

Sir James Dunbar was now come back to announce that the carriage had drawn up; and his unwieldy brother baronet was just stepping forward with a silently renewed offer of his arm to Adela, when Talbot Cleveland unexpectedly re-appearing, and not suspecting Sir Patrick's design, took her hand himself, saying, as he led her forward,

"How rejoiced I am again to see you! and to see you looking in such perfect health." Then, lowering his voice, he added, "It rains furiously, and I am not without hopes that Lady Dunbar, when you are placed, and she sees me stand dripping beside her ample vehicle, will offer me a seat in it. You will not oppose the charitable proposition from the fear of a little crouding?"

"No, believe me," replied Adela; "I only wish I could spare you the preliminary dripping! Could you not gain admission upon easier terms?"

"I should scarcely deserve admission at all, if I thought any terms too hard to obtain it."

Lady Dunbar was by this time arrived at the coach-door, and perceiving Talbot's unsheltered situation, compassionately called out,

"Hoot away, my good young gentleman! Nay stand parleying there in a' this troubl'ous weather! Gang to your ain carriage, or step quickly into this, for it is nay meet for man or beast to be exposed to such a deluge!"

Talbot required no second invitation, but springing into the coach the moment she was seated, he placed himself between Adela and Christina, and was admitted with equal good-humour by both.

CHAP. II.

HUMANITY.

At the door they were quitting, just as the carriage was driving away, Sir Patrick Harley was descried—(the lamps shedding a dim lustre upon his blank face)—looking with grave astonishment after the prize he had lost, and pondering, apparently, upon the manner in which the disappointment had befallen him! Christina, laughing immoderately, kissed her hand to him, and Sir James Dunbar, with no great disposition to commiseration, said,

"An' he seeks not some better place of shelter, the gude baronet runs meikle chance of practically ascertaining whether an *oyster* or a *Dutchman* can best endure humidity?"

Christina, who though she loved, also feared her brother, was alarmed lest this observation should bring on inquiries which

would expose to his knowledge the liberties of speech she had allowed herself. To avert the danger, she poured upon Talbot a succession of questions relating to himself;—his return to town, and his coming to the same theatre with themselves without seeming to know they were there. When he had patiently replied to each of these particulars, she suddenly added,

"Who was the young lady, brother, you were leading to her carriage?—Miss Cleveland wants to know as well as myself; and, I suppose, for the same reason."

"And what is that?"

"The lady's beauty."

"Did Miss Cleveland tell you this was her reason?"

"No, but she looked it."

"It is remarkable, that the lady was singularly inquisitive about *her* name also."

"And did you satisfy her curiosity as expeditiously as you do ours?"

"I had no opportunity," answered he, laughing, "of satisfying it at all.—A link-boy, just as she was stepping into her carriage, brought his torch so near her face, that he alarmed her very much, set me

a scolding, and drove beautiful ladies, and their names, and their very existence, entirely out of our remembrance!"

"But here is no link-boy, my dear brother, to play us the same trick! So, unless you purposely mean to be mysterious"....

"I mean," interrupted he, "to tell you nothing further about her! And if my dear little sister had been as quick in discernment on this occasion as I have known her upon most others, she would have found out my intention sooner!"

"I am answered!" cried Christina, in a tone of mock-humility—"Pray, brother, forgive me, and till I see the beautiful lady again, I will do so no more."

"That binds you to a promise of longer forbearance than you are aware of. She leaves town to-morrow, and, probably, for a considerable time."

"Meanwhile—I wish I might just venture to ask one more little harmless question! It has nothing to do with her name, I assure you."

"Well,—speak plainly."

"Is this poor dear incognita lady, quite—quite—good?"

"Is she a woman of character, do you mean?"—

"Y—e—s!"

"Of character so unblemished—so perfectly above suspicion, that I should not be more surprised to hear her censured for deformity of person, than glanced at for deformity of mind!—And, now, let the subject rest."

The three young ladies, on alighting at General Cleveland's, repaired, with Talbot, into the drawing-room. It was deserted; and Barbara enquired of a servant, whether her mother and sister were come home?

"Yes, ma'am; but they have been gone up to bed some time."

"I am astonished," cried Christina, "that Jemima's curiosity would allow her to retire, before she had seen Miss Cleveland!"

"We may reasonably suppose," said Adela, "that she felt no curiosity about me."

"Then her nature is marvellously altered; for hitherto, nothing can have exceeded the eagerness she has shewn to look at every fresh face that has entered the house. I have known her play at hide-and-

seek a whole morning, to catch a peep at a new nursery-maid!—Now, you know, a new cousin ought to be reckoned of a great deal more consequence, than a new personage of that description."

Adela said, she heartily forgave Miss Jemima if she was not of that opinion; lighted her candle, and bidding Talbot and his sisters good night, retired.

Whilst assisted by Amy to undress, she heard with concern, that poor Mademoiselle Durocher was so considerably worse, that it had been thought necessary by the housekeeper, to send for the family apothecary.

"And he very foolish man," continued Amy; "for he frighten all the servants, and make them think they die if they go near her!"

"This is worse than foolish, Amy—it is mischievous! It will prevent her receiving proper attendance."

"Ah, no.—There be one, two, good Christians among them, that no feel afraid:—and me no afraid. Me been sitting in her room till now."

"Can she speak English?"

"Bad enough; bad as me. But she no wish for speaky. She groan and sigh sadly; and hold her poor head; and look red, and then white! Oh, she very bad! Me tell you what, dear Missy. If she no better to-morrow, me no come near you, for fear to make you catchy all her illness!"

"I shall have no other apprehension, my excellent Amy, in seeing you here, than that of depriving her of so humane an attendant. Bring me the earliest account you can in the morning; and if there are any little comforts which you think I can afford to furnish her, go out to-morrow, and buy them."

Amy, delighting in good offices, readily promised obedience to this charge, and then departed.

Again, in her little check bed,—which, with the rest of the furniture that so suitably accompanied it, remained unaltered—Adela enjoyed the most enviable repose, a nd awoke not till Amy appeared in the morning with tidings of the suffering foreigner. These were of the most alarming nature—

"Ah, dear Missy," cried the compas-

sionating negro, "the poor soul, me do sadly fear, will die! She never get no sleep all night; and now, she in so bad fever, she talk all wild and strange, and she refuse all what the apothecary say she must take."

"Has he, then, seen her this morning already?"

"No;—but what he say last night she must take."

Adela, benevolently interested for a poor stranger, newly arrived in a house where she had not a single friend, and reduced by illness to so deplorable a condition, listened to these details with unfeigned regret, and became anxious that Mrs. Cleveland should be apprised of her danger, in order that better succour might be procured for her.

On descending to breakfast in the General's study, she found him already there, reading the newspaper near a window—

"My kind and pleasant visitor," cried he, extending to her his hand, "you are come, I hope, as yesterday, and as I wish you to do every day, to enliven my solitary breakfast?"

"I come with the greater confidence, my dear uncle, because you were so good as to say something of this sort before."

"I am glad I did. Ring, therefore, as lady president of the tea-table, and order whatever is wanting; and tell me how you were amused at the play last night."

After satisfying him upon this subject, and conversing for some time on other general topics, she mentioned the distressing state of the new governess.

"Poor woman!" cried he, "I am very sorry for her. She ought to have advice superior to that of a common apothecary. Take a sheet of paper, my dear, and I will dictate a note to Dr. S——."

Adela, rejoicing in this command, speedily provided herself with every material for writing, and then asked her uncle what she should say?

He was on the point of telling her, when the door was softly opened, and a youthful and extremely pretty face appeared at it, and remained smiling and stationary, as if waiting for an invitation to advance.

"Well, my dear Jemima, why don't you come in?" cried the General.

"Dear papa," in a coaxing voice, answered the fair intruder, "I did not know, as you seem engaged, whether I might; yet I long to ask you how you do—I long to tell you how impatient I was to get home, and how anxious I am for an introduction to Miss Cleveland."

Her father affectionately embraced her, and the introduction for which she expressed such eagerness, immediately ensued.

"Ye are," said he, smiling, "to be rival beauties this spring; but not, therefore, I trust, domestic enemies."

Jemima, with great apparent modesty, said, that the rivalship of which he spoke, could never take place, for she saw, at once, that it would be the height of vanity to pretend to any competition.

Then relinquishing the General's hand, and taking one of Adela's, she addressed her as her dear cousin, and hoped that they should be excellent friends.

Adela, warm-hearted as she was by nature, found nothing responsive in her own bosom to this ready kindness. She was one whose impressions were lasting, but not sudden: too much profession, on the part

of a stranger, repelled rather than attracted her; and so conscious was she of her inability to keep pace with their effusions, that whenever any such were poured upon her, the contrast they formed with her own involuntary reserve, always filled her with an uneasy sensation of self-reproach.

Jemima Cleveland, however, appeared not to notice or resent her backwardness. She alternately addressed her or the General with the most insinuating sweetness; asked if she had yet made acquaintance with "the enchanting little Laura?" and the instant after, calling her the most perfect beauty she had ever seen, she added, with an appearance of undesigning simplicity,

"How extraordinary it is, that you should be so much more like her, Miss Cleveland, than her own sisters!"

The General, regarding Adela with complacency, seemed infinitely more gratified by this compliment, than the person to whom it was addressed.

"Ah, papa," cried Jemima, smiling, "you may well look at my cousin with that air of conscious satisfaction! You know very well, that her beauty, as well as

Laura's, is that of the Cleveland family, which has always been celebrated for the number of its handsome men and women."

"My dear Jemima," said the General, patting her cheek, "you are come back in a prodigiously favourable disposition towards us all! I suspect you have been taking lessons at Hampton, of some insinuating lover, in the art of saying agreeable things."

Just then, Christina abruptly entering, with a face full of business, eagerly exclaimed,

"Oh, good Lord! there is the very deuce and all to pay up stairs! In the first place, Jemima, mamma is exceedingly angry with you, for coming down here to breakfast without saying a word to her of your intention; and you may depend upon receiving a famous good lecture. In the next place, we are all to leave the house in an hour's time! My poor dear governess is horribly ill, and the apothecary who has just been here, says that her fever is infectious, and threatens every body who breathes the same air, with death and destruction!"

"Good heaven! Is this account true?" cried Jemima, looking aghast.

"True as the fright it has thrown you into, my dear sister! But the panic of mamma surpasses any thing you can form an idea of. You know the horror she has of contagious disorders. I do believe, she already figures to herself poor little Laura attacked by every mortal symptom under heaven. She has sent for her down into the drawing-room, where, sitting with every window open, she has sprinkled her clothes with Thieves' vinegar; stuffed a bag of camphire down her bosom, and forbidden her to go within a yard of the landing-place. The coach is actually ordered, and we are to set out for my aunt's at Hampton as soon as the necessary preparations can be completed."

"How intolerably disagreeable a plan!" cried Jemima, forgetting her assumed softness, and speaking with genuine asperity, "why can't the odious governess be removed to a lodging?"

"Poor soul! don't call her odious now, Jemima, for I assure you, I believe she is

almost at death's door! It is impossible to move her in such a state."

"I wish with all my heart she had never entered the house! Another dull visit at Hampton will quite kill me! Besides, how is my aunt to find room for us all? We shall be packed together like bees in a hive; she will be out of humour the whole time we are there; and I dare say, as soon as we arrive, it will begin raining, and never cease till we return."

"How fertile an imagination you have, Jemima, in devising possible evils!" observed the General. "But let us go to your mother, and enquire into the exact state of the case."

He was then proceeding towards the door, when Mrs. Cleveland, and presently after, Talbot, and his eldest sister appeared.

"What are we all to do, General?" cried she, in great commotion; "have you heard how horrid a predicament we are thrown into? Governesses, whether sick or well, are the plagues of one's existence! I never admitted one into the house yet,

who did not, in some way or other, turn out a source of disturbance! Either their characters have been misrepresented, and they have proved worthless and intriguing; or their tempers have been insupportable, or they have given themselves such fine-lady airs, that they disdained half the duties of their place! Upon my honour, I am sick of the whole race, and would give any body a premium, who could find out a way of doing entirely without them! But, tell me, don't you think it will be better to get Laura, and, indeed, ourselves, removed from this pestilential air as fast as possible?"

"Children," said the General, "catch infection so easily, that it may certainly be expedient to send Laura away without loss of time. But I am by no means equally convinced of the necessity of clearing the house of all its maturer inhabitants. Many precautions might be used to guard against contagion; and such arrangements might be made as should render it perfectly safe for you and the three elder girls to remain where you are."

"How unfeelingly you talk, General!

But I am well aware, that if Laura can be secured, that would be quite sufficient for your tender heart! However, anxious as I am to preserve her, you may depend upon it I shall not be less anxious to preserve my other children, and myself, from the noxious atmosphere of this lazar-house! I strongly recommend your quitting it yourself."

"Very fortunately," said the General, smiling, "I am under an engagement to leave town to-morrow for a week."

"But you will not sleep here to-night?"

"I shall, most assuredly."

"Indeed you are much to blame. But it were vain for me to oppose it; I can only repeat to you my advice not to run such a risk; and remind you, that as my sister's house at Hampton is so small, it becomes incumbent upon you to think of some other place where Miss Cleveland can be received."

"I protest, I don't, at this moment recollect where upon earth I can send her! —The Somervilles are not yet in town, and she is unacquainted with every other family in London.—Whom can we apply to?"

"My dearest uncle," said Adela, distressed to find herself so troublesome a personage to dispose of, "let me stay where I am; I have no fears of infection, and would infinitely prefer remaining in the house by myself, to causing you any sort of perplexity."

"My son," said Mrs. Cleveland, with precipitation, "would be here to protect you! He has already declared his determination of keeping possession of his accustomed room."

"But I could easily," cried Talbot, ashamed of the petulance with which this was spoken, "obtain a bed at some friend's."

"No, no;" said his father, "we cannot think of allowing my niece to continue here; but the difficulty is, what to fix upon that would be more eligible."

At that moment, Julius, whose knock at the street door had been disregarded or unheard by the perplexed family-party, walked into the room.

"Why, here's a committee of the whole house assembled in grave debate!" cried he, "what the deuce are you all caballing about?"

The General briefly informed him, adding—

"You are come at a lucky moment to assist us with your advice about Adela."

"I believe I am!" said he, significantly, "my opinion is, that the business would have ended, in her being left here to take her chance for her life with the household cats! But cats, you know, are better provided with lives, than pretty girls; so I shall take Adela, and her one little harmless spark of vitality, under my own care!"

"An excellent resolution," said Mrs. Cleveland; "but where will you place her?"

Without a moment's hesitation, he coolly answered—

"In Hertford Street—at my father's."

Nobody opposed this decision, yet all were internally surprised at it, and the heart of Adela beat quick with undefined emotion on hearing it suggested.

"And now," continued Julius, "since we are talking of Adela's going to my father's, I should be happy to hear, my much honoured uncle, if you have no objection to inform me, what might be the

weighty affair, which compelled you to leave Bath in such prodigious haste, and which reduced me to the alternative of leaving my sister in your deserted lodgings, or of introducing her, at a time when my father was too ill to see her, into his melancholy mansion !"

The General was too much accustomed to the plain and untemporizing manner in which Julius was wont to speak, either to resent or to wonder at this blunt demand. Yet, he seemed somewhat embarrassed how to answer him satisfactorily, and after a few moments' hesitation, said—

" I quitted Bath in consequence of a letter written to remind me of an engagement, a very particular engagement, which —which had escaped my memory."

Julius laughed, and looking expressively at his aunt, said,—

" How do you altogether approve these *very particular* secret engagements ? Hey, my dear madam ?"

Mrs. Cleveland, deeply colouring, and regarding her suspected lord and master with the haughtiest resentment, as if stung by the remembrance of some past injury,

or the apprehension of others that were to come, austerely replied to this provoking interrogatory—

"I leave the General to the admonitions of his own conscience! It is long since he has been importuned with any from these lips!"

"Come, come, Julius," cried his uncle, "I forbid all these mischievous innuendoes; mischievous, at least, in their effects upon Mrs. Cleveland, who, as you may perceive, is always ready to admit unfavourable impressions."

The General was an easy-tempered, gay, and not very acutely-feeling, man of fashion. Sensible of many provocations his disposition to gallantry had given his lady, and aware, perhaps, that her causes of resentment were not, even at the present moment, without foundation, he submitted to her censures, when not to be escaped, with patience and humility; but sought every means of avoiding them, and was alike uninfluenced by their asperity or their kindness. The system of his life seemed to be, by words and looks at least, if not by actions, to keep all with whom he associated in good humour with *him*, by endeavouring to keep them so with *themselves*.

Julius, satisfied with the passing cloud he had raised, and well pleased at once to have tormented his aunt, and punished his uncle for his ill-timed defection of Adela, now suffered the business to rest, and asked Mrs. Cleveland when she meant to leave town?

"I wait but to hear that every thing is ready," answered she, "and shall then set out without a moment's delay."

"But who," enquired Talbot, "is the man by whom all this fearful alarm has been excited? A mere consequential, conceited little apothecary, who, perhaps, understands nothing of his patient's complaint, and may be exaggerating all her symptoms to increase his own credit, if she recovers. An experienced and regular physician should be called in."

"Now pray, Talbot," cried his mother, "don't be so officious and inconsiderate!—The woman's illness will be attended with quite inconveniences enough, without entailing upon us the expense of feeing physicians and running up a long apothecary's bill besides! Mr. Smithson, the man who now prescribes for her, has always attended

our people when any of them have been ill; and, for aught that ever I heard, manages them exceedingly well."

Talbot looked down, and bit his lips; Julius cast an intelligible look towards his sister, who turned away, ashamed to meet his eye; the General whistled a march, and strolled to the window—and Christina, seeing the opportunity, when every body was silent, to urge a request she had been meditating the last ten minutes, went up to her mother, and said—

"Mamma, if my cousin Julius will admit me, might not I stay behind in Hertford Street with his sister?"

"On what account?" said Mrs. Cleveland, "I don't at all understand the motive of this demand."

"Why, you know, mamma, I have two or three masters who come to me twice in the week when I am in town, but certainly, will hardly take the trouble of trudging after me to Hampton. In Hertford Street, they could just as well attend me as here, if I only wrote to them a note by the post."

"This solicitude about your masters," said Mrs. Cleveland, smiling, "is some-

thing perfectly new!—However, if your two cousins have no objection to being troubled with you, you have my full leave to stay."

Julius, with whom the little girl was a great favourite, declared he should be extremely glad of her company; and Adela, with equal cordiality, repeated the same assurance.

"Dear mamma," cried Christina, in the wildest transport, "only think what an excessive relief to you and my poor aunt, this arrangement will be! You would not have known, in her nutshell of a house, how to dispose of me for a single hour in the day. You know she has no spare room in which I could have been sent to do my lessons; I must have been in your way from morning till night; and every time I spoke, my aunt would have complained, I distracted her weak head; and every time I moved, you would have said, I was the most troublesome little creature in the universe."

"All this is extremely probable," cried her mother; "and I wish Miss Cleveland and Julius may have no reason to say the same thing."

She then, followed by her two eldest daughters, left the room; and Adela, being told by her brother that he would walk with her to Hertford Street immediately, if she would go up and get ready, hastened to her own apartment, accompanied by Christina, and rang to give Amy directions about packing.

A young woman who was an assistant in the nursery, and was likewise an occasional attendant upon the Miss Clevelands, answered her bell.

"I wished to speak to my own maid," said Adela.

"She is in Mam'sell's room, Ma'am; and she desired me to wait upon you, if you please, in her stead, for she is afraid of bringing poor Mam'sell's disorder to you."

"I fear," cried Adela, "my kind and worthy Amy runs great risk herself."

"Is there no nurse provided?" enquired Christina.

"Not at present, Miss; but I suppose the housekeeper will receive orders to send for one."

Adela, now, with a pencil wrote a short note to Amy, earnestly exhorting her not

to expose herself to greater danger or fatigue than could possibly be avoided; professing the warmest admiration of her disinterested benevolence; and requesting her, when she was at leisure, to pack up such an assortment of her apparel, as might be requisite for an absence of a few days. She informed her whither she was going, and said, she would send for the clothes in the evening.

This note she entrusted for delivery to the young woman who had made so civil an offer of her services; and, at the same time, presented to her a trifling donation.

Mrs. Cleveland's carriage was now at the door, and she and her daughters were in all the bustle of immediate departure. Adela took leave of them on the drawing-room landing-place, where Jemima, in a whisper, said to her—

"Oh, pity me, dear cousin! for you know not to how dull a purgatory I am going!"

Christina, all joyful alertness, drew Adela away before she could make any answer; Julius gave to each an arm, and

they immediately set forward on their walk to Hertford Street.

"I wonder," said Adela, as they quitted the house, "when I shall be permitted to inhabit the same mansion for more than three days! I have lately seemed to be perpetually trying new residences and new faces."

"I will say nothing about the different faces you may meet with," said Christina; "but the accommodations of any other abode may easily equal those you enjoyed at my father's."

"Oh, I promise you an excellent apartment," cried Julius.—"You shall have the room which Elinor occupied before she was married; and our little Christy shall have the one next to it, which belonged formerly to Alicia. But in all other respects, your expectations must be humble in proportion to my circumscribed means of treating you with splendour. I have no regular cook, but when I chance to dine at home, an old woman who has the care of the house, broils, burns, or smokes me a beef steak—whichever may happen—and sends me up three

or four raw, or broken potatoes. I have no carriage or man-servant, except a valet and a groom; the former, if you should ask him to go on an errand, is too fine to do you that honour; and the latter, too ignorant and stupid. But the old woman must get a niece, or a daughter, or a cousin, to come in and help her; and we must brush up Joe, the groom, and try to fit him for the supreme dignity of waiting upon you at table, and throwing coals upon your fire."

"Oh, I dare say that Joe, the groom, and the old woman," cried Christina, "will perform their parts delightfully. But I should have no objection at all to cook my own dinner! It would be a very entertaining employment; and there seems no vanity in thinking, I should succeed quite as well as the burning and smoking lady, of whom you make such honourable mention."

"No, no," said Julius, "let her keep her office; for when she has spoilt my meat, I can at least have the comfort of scolding and swearing at her: whereas, if *you* shrivelled it up to a cinder, I should be forced, in common civility, to say it was very good, and to gulp it down without a murmur."

They were now arrived in Hertford Street, and Adela again entered a house belonging to her father—the very house in which she was born—in which her mother had once acted as mistress, but whence that mother had so disgracefully effected her flight!—These thoughts cast a depression over her countenance, the cause of which Julius better comprehended than did their lively little companion; who, whilst skipping through the spacious, but deserted apartments, from time to time regarded Adela with surprised concern, and, at length, ventured to say—

"What is it, dear cousin, that, all at once, has made you look so melancholy? I wish you would brighten up a little, and let me tell you some of the odd fancies that have just darted into my head!"

"Do tell them, my dear Christina; they will do me good."

"Well, then; you know fairy-tales are forbidden pleasures in all modern school-rooms. Mrs. Barbauld, and Mrs. Trimmer, and Miss Edgworth, and a hundred others, have written good little books for children, which have thrown poor Mother

Goose, and the Arabian Nights, quite out of favour;—at least, with papas and mammas. But naughty young masters and misses, if they can get at them, still read these old condemned vagaries: and, between friends, I must honestly own, that *I* have been one of the number. Now, the sight of these great rooms, and our possessing the entire range and dominion over them, puts me immensely in mind of some of the Fairy-tale heroines I have met with, who, being turned adrift into huge palaces, wandered about without beholding a single living creature;—yet, had all their wants supplied, and even their wishes anticipated by invisible hands. And, at last, when they least expected it, found themselves politely welcomed by some shaggy, but courteous monster, who, seeing himself rising into favour, in spite of his ugliness, suddenly resumes his natural shape, and proves to be a resplendent beau, all over diamonds and rubies, and wearing a magnificent crown upon his poor empty head!"

As she finished her speech, Wasp, the favourite dog of Julius, walked gravely into the room, as if to reconnoitre the new

comers, and, at the same time, to greet his master's return.

"Here is your disguised beau, Christina!" cried Julius. "This, no doubt, is the gentleman, who, when he has cast his coat, means to deposit his rubies and his crown at your feet."

"He is not quite meek and submissive enough in his first approaches, to encourage such an idea," observed Christina, shrinking back a little apprehensively. "However, we shall see: there are probably different tempers amongst these concealed admirers; and this gentleman's may, by nature, be somewhat of a surly cast."

By degrees, the thoughtfulness and gravity of Adela gave place to greater cheerfulness, and she, once more, rejoiced Christina by the sight of a smile, and gratified her brother by shewing a disposition to become reconciled to her new abode. He spent with his youthful guests the greater part of the day; was solicitous for their comfort; sociable, affectionate, and perfectly good-humoured; and Adela, with every passing minute, felt her grateful heart more cordially drawn towards him.

In the evening, when she sent to General Cleveland's for her clothes, the messenger who brought them, delivered to her the following note:

"Honerd Missy,

"THE pore govern-ass is no beter. Massa Tallbat Clevland hav sint for a doctur. The doctur no think her sickness catchin. The houskeper hav sint for a nurs. She can't come til to-morro. Al your things wil be rite, me believ; an remain, honerd, deare Missy,

"Yours to command,

"AMY PRICE."

Adela was much pleased with this proof of Talbot's attentive benevolence, and sincerely glad to find that the invalid's disorder was supposed to be less dangerous to those about her than had at first been apprehended. She communicated both pieces of intelligence to her brother and Christina.

"I was sure," cried the latter, "from what passed this morning, that Talbot would not suffer the day to end without procuring a physician to visit the poor

soul. He has done a thousand of these considerate and generous actions."

"Talbot is the best, I verily believe, of the whole Cleveland generation," observed Julius; "no disparagement to you, my girls, for I mean of the male generation. But it is astonishing where he picked up so much worthiness, and how he finds the means to exercise it so practically. He has a gay, and still a young father, who scorns to spare more from himself for the luxuries of his son, than, in decency, is indispensable; and he has friends, who, every now and then, to my certain knowledge, avail themselves of his open-heartedness to borrow from him without mercy; yet, I believe, he never is in debt, and I am certain he is never deaf to the voice of distress."

Christina was touched, almost to tears, by this high, yet deserved encomium on a brother whom she had so much reason to love and to respect; and Adela listened with delighted conviction to the praises of one whom she had, long since, so truly learnt to value.

Nearly a week elapsed, during which Mrs. Cleveland's terrors of infection re-

mained in full force. Yet the physician's opinion, that the governess's was no case of the nature which she apprehended, had been communicated to her; and she was perfectly aware that the servants left behind had escaped all mischief. Whatever her reasons might be, however, she still chose to continue aloof; nor was it till she heard the sufferer's delirium had entirely ceased, that she could be prevailed upon to fix any time for her return.

Adela heard not with great satisfaction, that this moment was, at length, approaching. Every thing had conspired to render her residence in Hertford Street infinitely preferable to her abode at her uncle's. The kindness of her brother knew no abatement, and his love of home became greater than at any former period. Adela's talents amused him; her temper and conversation were alike attractive to him; her sisterly affection conciliated his own warmest fraternal regard; and there was a purity in her principles, and a gentle steadiness in her conduct, that called forth his utmost esteem. Christina, divested of much of her habitual flippancy, contributed her due share towards

their contentment. She looked up to Adela as the first of human beings, and contracted for her so animated an attachment, that no temptation upon earth would have induced her to say a blunt or a sarcastic thing to her. She sought, and diligently observed her counsels; was pliant in her hands as a docile child in those of a judicious mother; aimed at her approbation as the highest reward, and repeatedly declared, that if she could but succeed, even in the remotest degree, in becoming like her, either in manners or disposition, her utmost ambition would be gratified.

CHAP. III.

PERPLEXITY.

One morning, whilst alone with his sister, gravely conversing with her on the subject of their father, Julius, whose concern at the prejudice entertained against her daily increased, suddenly exclaimed,

"Upon my honour, by thus estranging you from his house, my father has a great deal to answer for, not only on your account, but on mine. He often complains of my extravagance, and remonstrates against my love of dissipation. But what is there in such a home as this, unenlivened by the presence of either sisters or mother, to make me domestic? When in town, he has many engagements himself; and occasionally, also, he collects round his own table, a party of men, his cotemporaries in age, and emulators in gravity. I slip away from these

solemn personages as soon as decorum will permit, and ask myself, as I leave the house in search of better amusement, how much longer I could have borne their heavy political discussions without falling fast asleep? At other times, the apprehension of the gout induces my father to decline every invitation, and to shut himself up from all his friends for a week or ten days. I then often sacrifice to him my own gayest schemes: and we dine, *tête-à-tête*, upon chicken broth and bread-pudding. When this savoury repast is over, and he has commented a sufficient time upon the amount of my last draft on his banker, he falls into a gentle doze, and I effect a gentle retreat, and we see no more of each other till the following day. Now, ask yourself, Adela, whether this is the description of a home that can be very inviting to a young man? You can bear me witness, that since your abode here, I have shewn no such impatience to decamp: but society I must have; and if my father provides for me, under his own roof, no companions younger than himself, or much brighter than Sir Patrick Harley, he can have no reason to expect I

should abstain from repairing to whatever scenes yield me more entertainment."

"If all this is the case, my poor Julius," said Adela, smiling, "and a companion you could love, is the only thing wanting to render you domestic, I can give you no better advice than to take unto yourself a wife."

"A wife! No, faith, that would be a little too serious. Besides, I am such a rash, impetuous fellow, that if I fell sufficiently in love with a girl to wish to marry her, I should allow myself no time to form a just estimate of her temper and understanding: but, pop! at the very outset of our acquaintance, if she would have me, I should run my head into the noose; and at the end of a few months, recover from my delusion, and find myself, perhaps, wedded to a fool or a shrew. I have known one or two instances of men, generally thought much wiser than I am, who have allowed their discretion to be lulled into a sound nap, from which, when, at length, they awoke, the earth has not contained more miserable and self-upbraiding wretches!

No, no; '*Give wedlock to the winds—I'll none of it!*"

By the peculiar meaning in his looks, whilst speaking of the matrimonial dupes he had known, Adela conjectured, that her brother intended an allusion to the alliance contracted by Algernon Mordington: but aware, from more indications than one, that the old animosity of their school-boy days still subsisted, she had no wish to hear him more fully explain his meaning.

With a delicacy and forbearance few would have manifested, Talbot Cleveland abstained, during the whole period of Adela's residence with her brother, from seeking to gain admission to her. When Julius drove her out in his curricle, or walked with her and Christina in the Park, he occasionally obtained a sight of her: but even when invited by the former to join their evening party, or to partake of their frugal dinner, he pleaded some engagement, and resolutely declined the tempting proposal. Adela was half aware, that his motive was to spare her his mother's strictures, and felt truly grateful to him: but Julius called him a perverse unsociable fellow; and after two

or three failures, forbore ever asking him again.

The very morning preceding Mrs. Cleveland's expected return, the General, just arrived from the country himself, paid his niece a short visit. He complimented her on her look of happiness and animation: said she did great credit to her brother's care; rejoiced that he was once more about to inhabit the same house with her; and then began enquiring what amusements she had participated in, and how she had spent her time.—Adela spoke with pleasure of the morning excursions which she owed to the kindness of Julius, but said her evenings had all been passed at home. The General seemed surprised.

"Your brother," cried he, "has so large an acquaintance, that he might surely have obtained for you some eligible chaperon to take you into public, or, at least, to have introduced you into one or two private assemblies."

"Julius never started such a plan, and I must own that none of the kind occurred to me."

"But, my dear girl, all this seclusion is

not what I wished you to come up to town for! You should see and be seen—and, the latter, at no time with better effect, than whilst you are a novelty to every eye, and wear the charm of so fresh and brilliant a bloom. Even early hours and regular habits will not long preserve it uninjured in our treacherous London air: it is beauty's greatest bane; and no artifice which may be employed to repair its ravages, is ever effectually availing to counteract its pernicious influence."

"My dear uncle," said Adela, gaily, "I will tell Julius, when he returns from his ride, what an enemy he has been to my prospects of preferment; and should I, a little time hence, lose any of the colour you are pleased so highly to commend, he shall be at the expense of all the *rouge* I may be obliged to substitute in its place!"

The General bore this ironical answer with great good-humour;—from the lips of a beautiful girl, indeed, what would he *not* have borne?—but presently rising to bid her farewell, he said,

"One thing I had nearly forgotten, which, all jesting apart, I wish you to at-

tend to. A very fashionable woman, with whom Mrs. Cleveland is well acquainted, gives a great ball to-night, and sent an invitation to our house full three weeks ago. Had your aunt been in town, she would undoubtedly have taken you to it, with one of her own daughters; as it is, you have no choice between going with a stranger, or staying entirely away. My opinion is, you would do better to go. I can secure you a proper introductress; my carriage shall be at your command; and if I am not much mistaken, Julius, as well as myself, will be there, to introduce you to as many partners as you may wish. What say you, my dear Adela, to this scheme?"

"That it sounds so pleasant," answered she, cheerfully, "I am by no means philosopher enough to withstand its allurements!"

Much pleased at her prompt and animated compliance, the General then departed, after telling her at what hour to be ready, and leaving a kind message for Christina, who was engaged with a drawing-master.

When Julius was made acquainted with what had passed, he cordially seconded his

uncle's proposal, and was evidently gratified that Adela had received from him such a proof of attention. Christina, however, expressed some doubt of her father's punctuality in regard to sending either the carriage or chaperon.

"He has no memory in the world," cried she, "and the arrangements he makes in the morning go as completely out of his head by evening as if they had never entered it! I say this, my dear cousin, to induce you to take some step towards making the business secure. It would be very disagreeable after having had the trouble to dress, to be obliged to sit down with your hands before you, waiting till past midnight for a companion and a conveyance that will never come."

"Disagreeable enough, certainly!" cried Adela, "but how am I, in such a case, to help myself?"

"Why, let me write a note to my brother. He *has* some memory, and as he will be at hand to give that of papa a little jog, there will then be a chance you may not have made your toilet in vain."

Julius declared she was an excellent

counsellor, and the note was immediately written and dispatched.

Whilst Adela was dressing, which, as much from necessity as choice, she did with extreme simplicity, Christina sat in her room, zealous to commend, if not adroit in assisting. Of envy she was incapable, and her spirits were highly exhilarated by the prospect her friend seemed to have of spending a gay and pleasant evening.

"If I was handsome," cried she, "I've a great notion, a ball would make my heart beat with joy sooner than any thing! It is astonishing what a rage for them Jemima has. How she will be mortified when she hears of the invitation mamma has neglected; I verily believe, she thinks, that in every ball-room, lovers are to be found growing as plentifully as duckweed in every pond! Now, I dare say, half the young men who go to those places, intend to be admired themselves, much more than to admire any body else. However, I never mean to shew *my* little queer figure in any such scenes. I can forget that I am not well-looking when I am with my own family and friends; but if I was to find my-

self in a fine lighted-up room, amongst tall men and women, looking down upon me as if they acquired additional consequence from my insignificance, I should want to run away and hide myself, and, perhaps, grow out of humour with the whole world!"

"Ah, little Missy," cried Amy, "me never hear you talk like foolish girl before! —You no queer-looking; you very pleasant-looking!—Me like your face better every time me see it.—Ah, once Massa Julius, he make mock at poor Amy, and call her blacky, and stumpy, and laugh if she only come in sight! But he no laugh now; he forget to think me blacky—and tall men and women, they forget to think you little!"

"They shall have no opportunity of either forgetting or remembering it, Amy, for I assure you, seriously, I will never go in their way. Mamma, when I have vexed her, tells me, she shall hate to present me, and thinks it a great threat to assure me, she shall take me out as little as possible. But it's no threat at all: I never wish to be presented. I wish to live amongst people I can love, and be at my ease with; and sometimes to go to the opera or to the play;

and to have plenty of books; and a comfortable house, and to know no more of the great world than I do at this minute.

Then, seeing Adela equipped,

"Come, dear cousin," continued she, "come down and shew yourself to Julius. I think he will allow, that *you*, at least, are a very suitable figure for a ball-room.—He means to go in the carriage with you, which, perhaps, may not be an unnecessary precaution; for, suppose, the lady papa sends for you, should, like little Red-riding-hood's grandmother, turn out to be a wolf in disguise—she might devour you before you got half way to the ball, if you went alone with her!"

The lady, however, was no wolf, nor was she to Julius so wholly a stranger as to Adela. Through the interference (which proved by no means superfluous) of Talbot Cleveland, the carriage was in excellent time, and no embarrassment or difficulty attended their getting to the scene of action.

To the long-practised frequenters of brilliant assemblies, one place of that description is extremely like another: but to Adela, every thing was so new, that she was

in momentary apprehension of being reproved by her brother for the look of curiosity with which she involuntarily gazed around her. In her wish to see every thing, she was so perplexed by the multiplicity of objects as almost to see nothing. To cultivated and elegant society she had, at Mrs. Somerville's, been early habituated: but to a splendid crowd, to a blaze of lights almost dazzling, to the mixed murmur of innumerable voices, and to a brilliant variety of decorations, she was wholly unaccustomed. Her senses were at first bewildered, and she nearly wished herself away: but ere long she grew less sensible of the confusion; she was able to distinguish one speaker from another: she listened to the sprightly airs to which the dancers were keeping time, with a wish to dance to them herself; and, on being solicited by a friend of her brother's to stand up, she gave him her hand with such alacrity, that Julius maliciously whispered to her,

"You looked as if you were going to thank him for taking compassion upon you!"

Talbot Cleveland, though not apparently eager to be the first to engage her, was

watchful to secure her hand ere any one else could ask her for the two dances that followed. When they were over, she would gladly, for some time, have become a mere spectatress; but her uncle, bringing up to her a gentleman he seemed unwilling she should refuse, she once more repaired to her former place in the set.

The new partner to whom she had been assigned, was obliging and attentive; yet his conversation, whilst they slowly made their way to the top of the dance, afforded her so little entertainment, that she found it impossible not to listen with more interest to almost every person that stood near her.

Amongst those whom she had at intervals the best opportunity of overhearing, was a gentleman dressed in mourning, who was conversing at some little distance, with the lady of the house. She was pressing him to chuse a partner, and complaining of the number of young men who gave themselves the airs of refusing to dance, and who were either sauntering uselessly about, or lounging idly upon their seats.

" Now, both these, my dear madam," said the stranger, " are offences of which

you ought, in common justice, to acquit me. I leave the chairs to the weary or the sluggish; and I am so far from being a saunterer, that when I find, in any part of the room, an attractive object, no spell-bound knight could be more firmly rooted to the same spot!"

"You positively, then, are determined not to dance? Have you quite forsworn it?"

"I forswear nothing. Rash vows, either *pro* or *con*, are the most dangerous temptations a man can lay himself under to become guilty of perjury."

"I am quite edified at the sententious originality of this remark!—But, my lord, if you are absolutely pre-determined against dancing, will you, at least, go and talk a little to some of those poor unmated misses? That would be raising hope—and hope, though unfounded, is more lively than total despair."

"I cannot resign the pleasant contemplation in which I am now harmlessly engaged, for the treacherous purpose of forwarding your plan, and raising delusive expectation."

He then, in a lower voice, said something

which made the lady smile, and direct her eyes, Adela thought, towards the place where she stood. This suspicion instantly induced her to withdraw from them her attention; and she very soon became so much engaged in the dance, that it would have been impossible to have listened to them, had she even continued to wish it.

The remembrance of this little dialogue would probably have been very speedily effaced from her mind, had she not, during the remainder of the dance, constantly perceived the gentleman in mourning standing within a few paces of whatever place she occupied. She looked around, to discover who could be so powerful a magnet of attraction to him; and seeing amongst the ladies who encircled her, not a single individual whose distinguished beauty or deformity could account for such persevering observation, a blushing surmise at length occurred to her, that she was *herself* the object of his contemplation. The idea, far from gratifying her ready vanity, embarrassed and almost offended her; she thought so unwearied a scrutiny, a proof of boldness and ill-manners; and when her

engagement ceased, it was neither fatigue, nor the desire of escaping from an insipid partner, that drove her so expeditiously to a seat beside her conductress, as an unaffected impatience to be freed from farther notice.

The supper-rooms were now thrown open, and Talbot Cleveland came forward to assist his cousin and her friend in securing places.

"You ran away," said he to Adela, "so alertly from your last partner, that you can in conscience expect no help from him; and besides, he has a sister here, whom, if he takes no care of himself, there is small chance that any body else will."

"Really, then," said Adela, who could not forbear laughing, "they are admirably matched! The sister I defy to be more unamusing than the brother!"

When, with some difficulty, Talbot had executed his undertaking, and seen the two ladies conveniently seated, he was denied the reward which he had promised himself, by hearing it insinuated amongst some ancient chaperons who were still standing, that if all the young men had the rudeness

to crowd forward to the tables, there would scarcely be room for half the female part of the company.

"Must I attend to this disagreeable hint," said he, in a low voice, to Adela, "or shall I affect deafness?"

"Oh, be deaf by all means!" answered she.

But, at that moment, his father calling him away to go to the assistance of some lady of their acquaintance, who was vainly struggling to force her way through the crowd at the door, the place which Adela wished him to occupy, was filled by a grave matron anxious to avoid sitting in a draft, and she saw of her cousin nothing more during the whole supper.

Mrs. Ross, the lady to whose care she was committed, proved sociable and well-bred, and they were engaged in a lively conversation, and attending less to what passed around them than to each other, when the mistress of the house, who declined taking any fixed station, but went about from one table to the other, chatting with her guests, came behind Mrs. Ross, and giving her a little tap upon the shoulder, said,

"You terribly require to be kept in order here! A young lady from the opposite side of the table, has been looking towards you for some of those sweetmeats standing near you, this half hour: and now, I see, she has been fain, poor thing! to put up with what they certainly do not much resemble—a slice of brawn!—Come, you must admit a gentleman amongst you: make a little room; here is one at hand, who promises as an assistant to perform wonders."

Mrs. Ross complied, and made, at the same time, some apologies for her imputed neglect—

"Well, well, I forgive you," cried their gay hostess;—"only, you know, I must not suffer my poor guests to be starved. Here, my lord, step into office; and be sure, neither to surrender your own, nor to engross the attention of any single individual, to the detriment of the sweetmeat-eaters on the opposite side of the table."

As she spoke, the gentleman she was so zealous to introduce, took possession of the seat which Mrs. Ross had contrived to vacate for him between herself and Adela,

and when the latter turned her head to look at him, she perceived with some vexation, that he was the very stranger she had so lately sought to avoid.

Mrs. Ross was wholly unacquainted with him, but finding he was disposed to converse, she evinced no unseasonable reserve, and the subjects which they mutually started, were entertaining and lively. Adela, at first, profoundly silent, and even endeavouring to listen to what was said at the other end of the table, gradually found her attention drawn solely to her two neighbours; and, at length, to her own surprise, found herself bearing a part in their conversation.

In the countenance of the stranger, who was young, and of a distinguished figure, there was a fortunate mixture of sweetness and spirit, and in his whole deportment, a manly elegance, which it was impossible long to overlook. The expression of his smile, and the tone of his voice were equally calculated to prepossess whoever conversed with him; and so completely did Adela forget how recently she had shunned him, that ere he had been seated half an hour by her

side, she thought him more agreeable than almost any person she had ever seen.

After supporting, for some time, on general subjects, a conversation which, the longer it lasted, the less Adela wished to terminate, he addressed himself to her with somewhat more seriousness, and said—

"On first hearing, to-night, the name of Miss Cleveland, I was prepared to behold a very different possessor of that appellation. You are, in this part of the world, at least, a new individual of that family: but allow me to enquire after some others—the nearest, and, perhaps, the dearest to you of the race,—who reside in Northumberland. Have you heard lately from Mrs. Somerville?"

"Mrs. Somerville? Do you know her, then, my lord?"

"I know her sufficiently to admire her more than almost any woman I am acquainted with."

"How delightful a thing to hear! But, admire her for every merit more than for that of being an alert correspondent.—I have heard from her only once these two months."

"Within that time I have twice had the honour of seeing her, and can assure you that she was perfectly well at my last interview. But shall we say nothing of her frank, hospitable, friendly and deserving husband?—If you enter not as warmly into the merits of his perfectly natural, and singularly benevolent character, as I expect you to do—you are not the Miss Cleveland you look, and ought to be found!"

"If a full sense of his excellence," cried Adela, smiling, "is all that you require of me to prove my own merit—fear me not, my lord;—I am entitled to your highest good opinion! No one honours the virtues, or loves the disposition of Mr. Somerville more cordially than I do."

"Thus far, then, we are agreed: and, I know not how it is, but a certain undefinable something persuades me, that in many other of our tastes and opinions we should, perhaps, equally coincide:—in *all*, alas! where are the two mortals who ever could concur?—Now, do not imagine I am lamenting, that we cannot all agree in discerning beauty in the same face, or sweet-

ness in the same sound. No; what I mean is, to regret that two persons, who think alike, perhaps, upon most subjects, and are inclined to mutual esteem, should yet so often be set at variance because they cannot equally value each other's friends.—We think it not enough that an individual entitles himself to our single good opinion; we require that for all with whom we are concerned, he should entertain the same partiality; and this can seldom, if ever, be the case.—When we meet again, Miss Cleveland, and you have learned to know more of me than you now seem to conjecture, you will better understand the tendency of these observations;—in the instance of Mrs. Somerville, indeed, I had the happiness of discovering that they were unfounded: but, shall I experience equal candour from *you?* If you hear me spoken of with enmity, will you suspend your judgment, and decide from observation, not from report?—Will you say to yourself—"My sister is acquainted with him; she professes to be his friend—he cannot therefore be so culpable as he is represented!"

He uttered this in too guarded a tone to be overheard by Mrs. Ross, and when he paused, fixed his eyes upon Adela, to observe the effect his mysterious language had produced. She was amazed beyond description, and was just beginning to supplicate for a clearer explanation of his meaning, when she felt herself somewhat roughly seized by the arm, and ere she could look round, the voice of Julius, in an accent of impatience, reached her ear.

"My uncle's carriage is at the door," cried he; "it is time you should go."

The abruptness of this summons, at such a moment, gave her much concern.

"My dear Julius," cried she, "could it not wait half an hour longer? I am very unwilling to be the first to run away."

Scarcely had she concluded this sentence, before a glance at her brother's countenance caused her to repent that she had ever uttered it. No language can convey the feeblest idea of the deep gloom, mingled with ill-suppressed fierceness, that deformed his aspect. His affrighted sister gazed at him aghast; but, unconscious of her alarm, or wilfully disregarding it, he snatched her

hand, which scarcely trembled more from consternation than his own from passion, and entreating Mrs. Ross, in words scarcely articulate, to follow, he drew her precipitately away.

In the anti-room, Adela gained courage to remonstrate against going without speaking to the lady of the house.

"Adela," said Julius, in a stern, yet subdued voice, "if you seek any excuse to re-enter the apartment you have just quitted, I never will forgive you!"

"Good Heaven, Julius! why do you utter such a threat? What can be the motive of so much indignation?"

He made no reply to this interrogation, but urging her, whilst seeking her shawl, to use dispatch, he scarcely gave her time to throw it over her shoulders, before he again drew her forward, calling loudly for his uncle's servants. They answered immediately; the carriage drew up; the two ladies were hurried into it, and then, to their great surprise, found that Julius was not going with them. Yet he was evidently in no humour to bear interrogation; they both, therefore, abstained from express-

ing what they thought, hastily bade him good night, and were driven away.

After some moments silence, "Is all this a dream?" said Mrs. Ross, "I can scarcely believe that a departure so sudden, so needlessly precipitate, is real!"

"I am afraid, however, we shall find it so," replied Adela. "But whatever my brother's reasons may have been for urging *me* to so prompt a retreat, I am ashamed, my dear madam, that he should with you have taken so unwarrantable a liberty."

"I beg you won't mention it. A chaperon, unless she dances, is never very sorry to get away from these places in reasonable time. I certainly would not have brought you from so gay a scene on my own account; but I am very willing you should know, that our early departure is no personal mortification to me."

Adela thanked her for this assurance, and but little disposed to speak longer of her brother, whose conduct had thoroughly chagrined her, she began making some remarks upon the good taste and elegance displayed in the decorations of the rooms they had just quitted.

"Yes," said Mrs. Ross, "I agree with you that every thing was incomparably arranged; but nothing more so, than the introduction to a seat between us, of the nobleman so dextrously assisted by our sprightly hostess! I could have laughed at the solemn gravity with which you, at first, received him; he too observed it, I am certain, for I saw his eyes glancing sideways towards you, with a very arch and droll expression. But you will allow, that he contrived, before we came away, to reconcile you very completely to his admission."

"I thought him," said the undissembling Adela, "extremely pleasant; and his knowledge of one of my sisters, and the just esteem in which he holds her, gave him an additional claim to attention."

Soon after this, the carriage stopped, and Mrs. Ross alighted at her own door. Adela was then driven to Hertford Street, in a temper of mind far from enviable. She was seriously perplexed to account for the resentment of her brother, and the extremely arbitrary measure he had pursued. The affection his recent kindness had awakened, tended but to make his present harshness more painful to be borne; and

though she endeavoured to repress all a
ger, she found it impossible not to con
sider such an act of authority as a specie
of tyranny he had no right to exert
The following morning, she hoped, would
clear up the meaning of so strange a trans-
action, and acquaint her with some extenu-
ating motive for it, which might enable her
no longer to think of it with displeasure.

But when morning came, and she s
fully and anxiously expected to talk th
whole matter over with him, Julius sen
word that his head ached, and he should
breakfast in his own room. Adela, griev
ously disturbed by this message, wrote to
him a short note to the following purport:

"My dear Julius, unless you are really
ill, come to us, I entreat, whatever dispo-
sition you may be in. Nothing can so
greatly concern me as your not allowing u
to see you. Dear brother, I beseech you
come!"

To these affectionate lines, the only an-
swer he returned was, that he would see
them before he took his ride:

"And perhaps," said Christina, "we
may also see mamma before that time comes.

he drive from Hampton is nothing, and he may be here to fetch us by two o'clock."

"I hope not," cried Adela, "I would not go away without having first spoken to Julius, on any account."

"Yet, I assure you, my dear cousin, if we are called for by mamma, she will take it exceedingly ill if you give that as a reason for not going down to her immediately. But why does not this unsociable Julius eat his dozen rolls with us this morning as usual? What signifies a little head ache?"

"Christina," said Adela, very kindly, "I love you too well, and am too much persuaded of your discretion, to conceal from you that the real cause of my brother's holding aloof, is displeasure against me on account of something which happened last night. Should you, therefore, be in the room when he makes his appearance, I must entreat you will glide quietly away, in order to give me an opportunity of having a little explicit conversation with him before I leave the house."

"Now this openness and confidence is what I quite adore!" cried Christina, gratefully embracing her. — "Dearest,

dearest cousin, there is nothing in the world you might not persuade me to do by such friendly treatment!—Heaven forgive you! But you really make me love you better than father or mother, or any body in the whole world!"

After this, they sat conversing over their work till near three o'clock, and Adela began to be seriously apprehensive that her brother, to the neglect of his promise, had quitted the house without deigning to see her. But, at the moment this mortifying idea suggested itself, the door opened, and Julius, ready booted, and his whip in his hand, stalked gravely into the room.

Adela advanced to meet him, and enquiring with cordiality how he did, she expressed her satisfaction at seeing him. He spoke not a word; but coldly nodding to her, he went up to the chimney-clock, regulated his watch by it, then drew on his gloves, and whistling to Wasp, was departing as silently as he had entered, when, seizing his hand, she earnestly entreated him to stop.

"What for?" said he, disengaging himself, yet standing still, and frigidly regarding her.

" To hear me tell you, Julius, that however I may have offended you, my fault was unintentional; to be reminded that, to-day we part, and that after so happy a residence eneath the same roof with you, it cannot e expected I should contentedly endure so nfriendly a separation."

Julius looked round to ascertain their eing alone, and then, finding Christina ad retired, indignantly replied—

" The same roof is ill-calculated to shelter wo people whose disposition so widely difers!—We shall do best apart, Adela.—You ave one set of feelings to indulge, and I ave another. Let us not talk of what is assed; facts speak for themselves, and you an say nothing to disprove the full conviction you gave me last night, of our utter inability to view things through the same nedium."

" These vague insinuations," resumed dela, " only confuse and bewilder me. Speak intelligibly, Julius;—tell me, clearly and plainly, what was my trespass?"

Losing all command of himself, Julius, now, furiously answered—

" With what a cool, plausible, d—ned

look of innocent unconsciousness she stand there to irritate and insult me!—I hate yo more for this facility of dissembling, tha for any thing you could have said eve openly to have defied me! C—rse me if ever wish to see your face again!"

And so saying, with a vehemence th was almost frantic, he rushed towards th door, drew it nearly off the hinges by th force with which he tore it open; and lea ing it thrown back at its utmost width, h flew down stairs, and was out of the hou in an instant!

Adela continued motionless for some m nutes after this outrageous ebullition, like person stunned and bereft of all power t think. Unused, since the days of early chil hood, to any species of harshness or violenc, the shock of such a scene almost ove whelmed her. When able to reflect, sh meditated upon it with sadness, affright nearly with incredulity: for hardly did seem possible to her, that a brother—o who had of late shewn himself so indulge and attached, should, without explainin upon what provocation, subject a sister,

uest, a defenceless female, to the endurance f so intemperate a burst of passion!

Christina, on re-entering the room, found er pale, and in tears.

"My kind and sweet cousin," cried she ndly and sympathizingly throwing her ms round her, "what is the matter?—It eaks my heart to see you in any sorw!"

Adela was unable to speak, but she leaned er head upon the little girl's shoulder, and ntinued to weep, though with less bitteress—

"I will not importune you with quesons," resumed the warm-hearted Christina; I will not even speak to you if it is disgreeable: but still rest your head upon me —still give me the pride of thinking that you love me well enough to find some comort in letting me be near you."

Adela, touched by her kindness, affecionately embraced her; and then, making n effort to recover herself, she arose, and walked to an open window—

"Whatever, dear Christina," said she, "you may conjecture from the visible dis-

tress in which you found me, forbear, I en treat, to speak of the circumstance to an human being. Not even my poor Am would I have apprised of it—and were i possible, I would willingly, and for eve forget it myself."

"Fear nothing from any indiscretion mine," cried Christina. "Where there much love, there is much reluctance to gi pain; and I would not say a word, or eve permit myself a look that should pain *yo* for all that the whole world could off me!"

Adela warmly thanked her; and whe both were restored to greater composur they began to express some impatience f the arrival of the General's or Mrs. Clev land's carriage—

"I do not," said Christina, "(and it i lucky for me, as I am forced to leave it) lik this house half so well now as I did when entered it. I will not give Julius credit f having aimed at so good a purpose, but ce tain it is, the vexation he has occasione you to-day, has reconciled me completely to thoughts of Mademoiselle Duroche and the gloomy old school-room."

As time wore away, and still no carriage appeared, Adela, determined against remaining in Hertford Street to dinner, expressed an earnest inclination to send for an hackney-coach, and drive to her uncle's without further delay.

"We know," said she, "that he, at least, is in town, though my aunt, perhaps, may not be arrived; and who would be so preposterously scrupulous as to attribute any impropriety to our going to partake of his dinner?"

"I assure you," cried Christina, "if mamma should be returned, you would be censured very much, for going home in a hackney-coach, with no servant behind it, and no gentleman to escort us. These are what she would call, little independent sort of frolics, which she would not permit either of my sisters to take even in a case of life or death; and I know, she would think we had reflected disgrace upon the house, by venturing, in the open face of day, to drive up to the door in so scrubby a vehicle. But, my dear cousin, you can send Amy to Berkeley Square to find out what they are all about; and if no carriage is to be had

from thence, she can at least ask for one o
the footmen to go behind us in our humb
hack."

Delighted with her intelligent friend fo
having devised this plan, and preserved h
from an undesigned breach of étiquett
Adela instantly gave the necessary instru
tions to Amy, and thought every mome
an age till she came back.

But the angry countenance with whic
the honest creature returned, gave her youn
mistress very little encouragement to enqui
what had been the result of her embass
Christina took the task upon herself, and he
first question was—

"Is mamma yet come to town, Amy?"

"Oh, yes, little Missy, and dressing ver
fine to go out to dinner! Me hear her sa
at her room door—'There is no carriage i
the way to send for Miss Cleveland now
her brother must manage all that, or sh
must wait where she is till the evening: le
her be told, we none of us dine at home!'—
Me in so great passion when me hear he
say all that ill-nature, and say out loud fo
saucy waiting-maids to listen, that me great
mind to give her good scolding! But, per-

haps, poor young Missy, she suffer for that, o me only mutter and look mad, and make aste down stairs. And in the hall, me ask irst one lazy footman, then another, to come way here with me, because my young lady nd Miss Christy want them; and they only augh, and turn up their noses, and say, hey never go behind hackney-coaches!—h, this too bad! Me tell them great heap f truth, and call them puppies, and no are for make great noise; and Massa Talot, he come out, and ask what was matter? So me glad then, and say him all; and the ootmans look so foolish; and Massa Talbot he frown, and bid one go with me uick, quick, and he stand himself in hall o see silly monkey do what he tell."

"A hopeful set of respectful attendants papa and mamma have had the happiness of collecting!" cried Christina; "but no matter; their impertinence has received a check, and, for to-day, at least, the interference of Talbot may keep them in tolerable order."

Adela was too much bent upon effecting her departure before the return of Julius, to bestow a thought upon this comparatively insignificant subject. She lost not a moment

in sending for a coach; and Amy, who had made all her preparations for removal in the morning, was ready to attend the two young ladies into it the instant it arrived.

CHAP. IV.

HOSPITALITY.

On reaching Berkeley Square, and repairing to the drawing-room, not a single individual of the family appeared to greet them. Talbot systematically kept away till his mother and sisters should have concluded their toilet. The General was dressing also, and no indication could be overheard of the slightest preparation for their reception in the dining-parlour.

"This is cold comfort!" cried Christina, looking half ashamed, and half ready to laugh: "but have patience, dearest cousin, and I will run up to mamma, and put her in mind of ordering us not to be starved."

The accomplishment of Adela's earnest wish (dictated by some degree of natural resentment) to escape from her brother's

house without again encountering him, gave her too much satisfaction to be easily checked by any manifestation of neglect where kindness was so little expected; and she besought Christina to hazard no remonstrance that could possibly give offence.

"Why, suppose I *should* affront them a little," cried she, "what can they do worse than condemn us to fast? My punishment will be as great if I hold my tongue, as if I speak; and I had a vast deal rather go without my dinner for being a little too frank than for being a great deal too helpless!"

She then ran away, and Adela saw her not again, till she descended with her mother and Jemima.

"Miss Cleveland," said the former, looking evidently much out of humour; "you are come to us again at a very unlucky time. I should have sent for you this evening, and, had you remained at your brother's, you might have dined in comfort. But now, I am sure I don't know what you will get, for the servants are all busy unpacking, and there won't be a creature at leisure to do any thing for you. It was very inconsiderate of Julius to send you back

in such a violent hurry; he might easily have guessed our people would not yet be settled."

The coarse inhospitality of these murmurs, Adela too thoroughly disdained to be ruffled by them.

"I am sorry," answered she, quietly; "to have arrived at an inconvenient moment: it was unavoidable, and I have only to assure you, madam, that I wish to give as little trouble as possible. A sandwich and a little wine and water will amply content me."

Then, turning to Jemima, she civilly addressed her, and hoped she had been quite well since they met.

"Oh, perfectly, my dear cousin," replied that young lady, with all her former ready kindness; "but this restoration to charming London will make me even better than well. I trust nothing will drive us out of town again before July. But I have a thousand things to ask you. Papa tells us, you were at Mrs. Elmer's ball last night. Only think, mamma imagined it was for to-morrow, and I had never seen the card of invitation, for it came whilst I was at my

aunt's before. Were you amused? D
you dance much? Do tell me all about i
and who you saw, and who you liked an
talked with most?

"These are things it would take mor
time to recount than you can now spare
hear. In a general way, I can assure yo
that the ball was very brilliant, and that
much regretted your not being in town t
enjoy it."

"Oh, nothing upon earth should hav
induced me to let mamma stay away, if
had suspected it was to take place so soo
If Talbot had been good-natured, he woul
have written to put us in mind of it; fo
Mrs. Elmer's is, of all the houses in Londo
the one I have long most wished to visit at
she has an amazingly fashionable acquaint
ance, and wherever she is, one always see
more fine men hovering round her than any
body else can contrive to attract. Pray d
you know whether Lord Ennerdale wa
there?"

"I heard no such name."

"Dear, I am amazed at that, for Mr
Elmer courts him prodigiously, and woul

ot, I am sure, permit him to stay away
such an occasion."

Adela thought it possible, the nobleman
ith whom she had conversed herself might
e this very Lord Ennerdale: but his re-
embrance, since the scene she had gone
rough in the morning, was painful to her;
r, unable to suggest any other reason for
e rage of Julius, she now ascribed it to
er having committed an impropriety in
olding a dialogue with so complete a
ranger.

Jemima was proceeding to make further
quiries concerning the ball, when her
other, growing very angry at the long
lay of Barbara in making her appearance,
id to Christina—

"Go up and see what she is about, and tell her not to keep us waiting in this intolerable manner! She always takes more time in dressing than any body else, and looks worse when she has done!"

"Shall I tell her so, mamma, with your love?" said Christina, looking very innocent.

"Tell her what you please; only desire her to make haste."

Talbot now allowed himself the gratification of coming in to welcome his cousin's return; and whilst he was still speaking to her, his father joined them.

"Adela here?" cried he, "why is she not, then, going with us, Mrs. Cleveland?"

"She came too late; we could not possibly have waited whilst she dressed: and, besides, I think our troop is quite sufficiently large and formidable already."

The General, only noticing the first part of this speech, said, "Are you not still waiting for Barbara?"

"Very much against my inclination, I assure you. But Barbara is totally out of my management, and the more she thinks it will provoke me, the more tedious, I believe, she takes pains to be."

"But if this good girl remains behind," resumed the General, "is there any dinner provided for her? She must not be left to the mercy of the servants."

"Oh, pray, General, don't trouble yourself about things so totally out of your department! Your niece won't be suffered to die of inanition."

"It would be a sorry death, and worse

than any she deserves, even for her abrupt flight from Mrs. Elmer's last night. What became of you, Adela, all supper time? And why did you allow yourself to be spirited away in so extraordinary a manner?"

"I only obeyed orders, my dear uncle; Julius told me your carriage was waiting; and as he seemed to think it was time I should go, and Mrs. Ross was very willing to believe it, I persuaded myself to depart with as little reluctance as I could."

"Take my advice, however, and don't let Julius, or any body else, influence you, another time, to quit a ball before it is half over."

Miss Barbara Cleveland, decorated to her own satisfaction, now made her appearance, and her mother instantly rang the bell to let the servants know she was about to descend. A brief sentence of salutation passed between the new-comer and Adela, who was far from repining when, in a few minutes, the whole party drove away.

A comfortless and sordid repast, ill dressed, ill served up, and worse attended, in process of time, followed their departure.

Epicurism is seldom the vice of youth, particularly amongst females; and Adela had too long been accustomed to a perfectly plain table, to have attained the slightest degree of critical acumen in the science of eating. Yet, there is a certain neatness and delicacy with which, even those who are the least solicitous for costly fare, can with difficulty dispense; and few things are better calculated to substitute disgust in the place of appetite, than the sight and smell of a slovenly made-dish.

"Oh, for the good old woman in Hertford Street!" exclaimed Christina, looking with dismay at the table before her. "Her skill in the art of cookery, notwithstanding the libellous assertions of Julius, is worth millions compared to this. How I should like to save a little bason of this smoky soup for mamma's luncheon to-morrow, and a plateful of yonder oily ragout, for the dainty palate of Jemima!"

Adela, as resignedly as she could, was dining upon bread and sallad, and, without thinking it incumbent upon her to defend the rest of the fare, she recommended to Christina the same expedient. They both,

as expeditiously as they could, dispatched their frugal meal, and with far more alacrity than they had sat down to it, hastened from the untempting board.

The remainder of the day, Adela dedicated to writing letters. Lady Rosalvan was the first whom she addressed, and the correspondent she was most anxious to hear from. Once only since they had parted, had her ladyship remembered the strict promise which she had given of writing with punctuality and frequency. Adela reminded her of this voluntary engagement, and expressed, as she really felt, great disappointment at its failure. Her other letters were to Dr. Hampden and Mrs. Somerville, to the latter of whom she recounted a considerable part of the dialogue in which she had been engaged with the nobleman at Mrs. Elmer's, and entreated her sister to send her a key by which she might understand its meaning.

It was nearly eleven o'clock before these epistles were concluded, and Christina (gently exhorted by her lovely monitress not to incur the risk of another rough summons from her mother's domineering at-

tendant) had been gone to bed some time, when the General and his son, but without the ladies, returned. Adela inquired the reason of her aunt's delay, and was told that she and her daughters had proceeded from the house where they dined to some great evening assembly.

"But Talbot and I," added the General, "were tired, at least we fancied ourselves so, till we saw you sitting here, and we chose to think one large party, at a formal dinner, enough for the same day."

After this little compliment, Adela's gallant uncle drew a chair close to the table at which she had been writing, and entered into a conversation with her and his son, so lively and so pleasant, that the carriage which brought home the ladies, drove up to the door, and a thundering knock announced their arrival, before any of the trio thought of retiring. Talbot, however, now started up.

"I must make good my retreat," cried he, "without beat of drum. If my mother finds me here, her indignation, at my having pleaded the fatigue of yesterday's ball for

not going with her to this evening's assembly, will know no bounds."

He then hastily bade his father and Adela good-night, and effected his exit without discovery.

A short desultory conversation on the different incidents of the day, took place after Mrs. Cleveland and her daughters came up; some complaints were made of Talbot, who, his mother averred, grew more and more sparing of his attendance upon herself and his sisters, and who, night after night, exposed them to the inconvenience of having to solicit people to call up their carriage, or inquire for their servants.

"Oh, mamma," cried Jemima, anxious to disprove so mortifying an assertion, "I am sure, when I have been with you, we have had very little trouble of that sort! There have always been gentlemen enough to assist us, unless, indeed, at such stupid parties as the one we were at to-night; where, except a few old married men, afraid of catching cold if they ventured within an hundred yards of the street door, there was not a male creature to be seen!"

Mrs. Cleveland, recollecting the presence of Adela, thought it more to their credit to let this assertion pass; and, in a few minutes, they all retired for the night.

Without surprise, for Christina had taught her to place but little dependence upon the promises of the courtly General, Adela perceived, that her apartment had undergone not the slightest improvement during the period of her absence. She regretted the circumstance chiefly as it interfered so materially with her desire of possessing some appropriate room in which to pass her mornings undisturbed and undisturbing. This dislike of being reduced to wander like a troubled spirit about the house, produced in her mind a sudden recollection of the school-room which she had so often heard mentioned by Christina; and thither she determined upon making application for leave to repair.

She breakfasted, as usual, the next morning, with her uncle, and Christina, unchecked, insinuated herself into their party. When they left him, Adela immediately communicated to her little friend her new plan, and was listened to with rapture—

"Is it really possible," cried the delighted girl, "you can mean to make me so very, very happy! Oh, how blessed a thought!—Your presence will introduce into that melancholy room, for the first time since it has been built, a ray of sun-shine and cheerfulness!—Come, come and behold it, and let not its gloominess, I entreat, induce you to alter your purpose."

Adela, however, before she would proceed, inquired whether the convalescent governess was in the apartment?

"I would not, on any account," added she, "intrude upon her without permission."

"She has not yet," answered Christina, "quitted her bed-chamber. But do not, my sweet cousin, make me hate her more than I naturally should, by staying away on her account. What interruption can your sitting in the room give to the tiresome lessons she may chuse to set me? On the contrary, your eye will keep me in better order than her severest penances; and the pleasure of hearing you say that I have been good and industrious, will make me take more pains than any prospect of reward that could be held out to me."

It was no easy task, when the eager Christina pleaded any cause which she had much at heart, to resist her; and Adela's scruples were all silenced from the moment she heard what were likely to be the beneficial effects that would result from her presence. Mademoiselle Durocher, when able to assume the functions of her station, far from objecting to Adela's quiet occupation of a corner in their apartment, speedily learned the advantage to be derived, with her giddy pupil, from the admission of an observer whom affection rendered her so ambitious to please. Never had Christina submitted with such perfect docility to school-room discipline; and never had the progress she made under her several masters, borne any proportion to that she was now daily attaining.

Meanwhile, though her mornings were so tranquil and secluded, the evenings of Adela were far otherwise. Mrs. Cleveland, it is true, was nothing less than urgent with her to partake in the round of engagements in which her daughters and herself were perpetually involved. But the General, on this subject, was too peremptory to be

trifled with, or misunderstood; and scarcely could Adela's own earnest intercessions, when fatigued, and anxious for a temporary respite, prevail upon him to renounce his plan of introducing her to the notice and admiration of every gay society in London.

Thus passed, in alternate retirement and dissipation, ten days or a fortnight, during which Julius never once approached his uncle's house. The whole family was in amazement at his long secession, and Talbot, at Adela's request, called upon him repeatedly: but he either was out, or chose to be denied, and nothing satisfactory resulted from the measure. Unable to endure, in total passiveness, a longer estrangement, she dispatched to him one morning the following lines:

"For the many pleasant hours I owe to your recent kindness, I am too grateful, my dear brother, not to lament most deeply your present neglect: yet, circumstanced as I am, you well know, it is out of my power to be the first to seek an interview; and the inactivity to which I am condemned, may, if not candidly interpreted, appear to you

the effect of indifference and unconcern: But these are feelings, of all others, the most remote from my heart. I think of you perpetually; I look round for you with eagerness every evening when abroad, and I listen for you with impatience every morning when at home. Disappointment follows upon disappointment, and I too often am compelled to fear that I have indeed lost my brother!—Ah, Julius! Remember how sensible you lately were to the pleasures of family affection—how cordially you accepted from me, and with what zeal you repaid, every testimony of confidence and attachment! You owned that our affinity, and the friendship it cemented, contributed to your happiness. My dearest Julius, so likewise, and in a yet higher degree, perhaps, it did to mine! Let us then, once more, I implore you, purchase the same happiness upon the same terms:—let us again be at amity with each other. Adieu.

"A. C."

This note was carried by Amy to Hertford Street, with directions to wait whilst Julius read it. But it produced no written

answer; a verbal and laconic message was all that could be obtained—"Tell my sister that I am going out, and too much hurried to write."

Adela heard this cold sentence with a sigh:—"What more," she cried, "can I do?—Surely, if he now perseveres in avoiding me, it is not from entertaining any doubt of my solicitude for a reconciliation!"

In the evening, Mrs. Cleveland, at the repeated and earnest supplication of her eldest daughter, was to receive a select company to hear a celebrated new performer on the piano-forte, from whom Barbara had lately begun taking lessons, and whom she was anxious to shew off to her cotemporary rivals. As his benefit was approaching, she also professed a great desire to introduce him to some liberal patrons of music, who might perhaps apply to him for tickets. But whatever her ostensible reasons might be, Mrs. Cleveland was perfectly aware, that the real and principal one was, a vehement ambition to be known and distinguished as the scholar of one of the most surprising performers who had, perhaps, ever been

heard in England. She took no pains to conceal this opinion; but willing to exempt herself from further persecution, gave an ungracious assent to the scheme, without, however, resigning the privilege of sneering at it every time it was discussed.

At this, comparatively, private party, Christina was allowed to make her appearance. She attached herself closely to Adela the whole evening; behaved with remarkable circumspection, and drew forth, from several of her mother's old friends, and from Sir Patrick Harley in particular, many compliments on the improvement of her manners and deportment.

"You do real credit, my dear little cousin," said he, "to your charming governess, and I never, in so short a time, saw so astonishing a reformation effected."

The epithet *charming*, applied to her poor emaciated and sallow Mademoiselle Durocher, cowering at that very minute over the school-room fire, was too much for the new-born gravity and decorum of Christina to withstand. She laughed heartily; yet recollecting the fabulous account she had herself given to Sir Patrick of Adela, and

suspecting it was possible, as he had been out of town for the last week, that the mistake had never been cleared up, she was on the point of asking him some questions to ascertain the fact, when the sight of Julius, just entering the room, arrested her words, and gave an entirely new direction to her thoughts. She instantly pointed him out to the half-doubting, half-rejoicing Adela, who, with some difficulty, forbore springing forward to meet him. As he approached the side of the room on which she sat, his eye encountered hers, and he saw her extending towards him a ready, yet timid hand. This sisterly and placable invitation, Julius had the unkindness to withstand. He looked at her for a moment, as if he scarcely knew her, and then passed on to speak to Jemima and her brother.

Sir Patrick Harley, slow as he generally was of apprehension, had not been wholly blind to such manifest symptoms of avoidance, nor had he failed to observe their painful effect upon Adela. He stood in deep meditation during some seconds, and then, walking gravely up to Julius,

"Did you perceive, Mr. Cleveland,"

said he, "a lady who, as you crossed the room, seemed desirous of speaking with you?"

"Yes, Sir Patrick; and what then?" somewhat abruptly demanded Julius— "Did she commission you to make the enquiry?"

"No, sir,—no, certainly she did not: but I am induced to trouble you upon the subject from motives of—of surprise,—of curiosity."

"And whence, my dear sir, either your surprise, or your curiosity?"

"Why, Mr. Cleveland," resumed the baronet, mysteriously lowering his voice, "this lady, whilst the family she resides with, was out of town—pardon me;—but did I not, pretty frequently, see you driving her about in your curricle?"

"Well, Sir Patrick, and let me ask again, what then?"

"Why, then, of course, you were upon good terms. You now, I believe, regard her differently?"

"What the d—l, sir, can all this be tending to?"

"Have patience—have patience, Mr. Cleveland! I shall soon make myself more clearly understood. I admire the lady, sir, very greatly!"

"You do her too much honour!"

"Why, certainly, her position appears—appears, at least—equivocal!"

Julius started, as if he had trodden upon a viper.

"Confusion! Sir Patrick—Do you say this to me?"

"My good sir, all things considered, is there not more reason to say it to you than to any man living? If you liked her well enough, a short time since, to endanger her reputation by your assiduities, why do you slight her now? If you only affect this reserve as a blind to the persons she is engaged with—"

"The persons she is engaged with! Endanger her reputation!—In the d—l's name, Sir Patrick, who and what do you take her for?"

"Why, sir, Christina told me the capacity she came in, the very night of her arrival."

"The capacity she came in!"

"Yes, Mr. Cleveland; and I must take the liberty to add—though, to be sure, it is no business of mine, and young men will allow themselves great licences in these days—yet, I must say, that I think it was almost a pity to select this porr girl as the object of your pursuit:—she had a very modest appearance. But I wish you would now be sincere with me; I wish you would tell me whether you have now positively given her up."

Julius, convinced the poor baronet was involved in some almost inextricable blunder; half inclined to laugh, and half provoked to be in a rage, now said—

"Have you never heard her name, Sir Patrick?"

"I have forgotten it—foreign names I can seldom long retain."

"But you have not forgotten the capacity in which Christina told you that she was introduced here?—Pray, what was it?"

"The child said, she was her governess. As such, of course, I should only have considered her in the light of a handsome young woman, who it was a pity should be de-

voted to such a life of dependence—but with whom I could have no concern or relation. As your discarded favourite, Mr. Cleveland, the case becomes different; and if you really and truly mean to break off with her, why may not I seek to render myself acceptable?"

Julius found it impossible longer to preserve his gravity, and whilst he laughed without controul, Sir Patrick, regarding him with some resentment, said very coldly—

"The lady, sir, may perhaps not think my dispositions in her favour so ridiculous!"

"We will ascertain that point in a moment, my dear Sir Patrick!" cried Julius, endeavouring to recover his gravity—"Come with me, and I will have the honour of introducing you to her immediately."

Sir Patrick hung back, half distrustful of his meaning, but Julius, seizing his arm, drew him almost forcibly forward, and paused not till they reached the spot which Adela still occupied.

"Now, Sir Patrick," cried he, "give me leave to assist your intention of rendering

yourself acceptable to this highly honoured lady: allow me to solicit a continuation of your favourable dispositions in behalf of—Miss Cleveland—of my sister!"

Whilst Sir Patrick, breathless with amazement, was considering what to say, Adela, delighted by her brother's approach, and yet more, by the apparent restoration of his good-humour, snatched his hand, and eagerly, though in a suppressed voice, said—

"Oh, Julius! I am so happy that you have again entered this house!"

He hastily, and with affected carelessness, shook the hand which she had placed within his own, saying—

"Don't let us recur to the past. We have both something to complain of, and must both resolve to forget and forgive!"

Adela was too sincerely desirous to be upon good terms with him, to cavil at an assertion which, ignorant as she still was of the nature of the offence she had given him, neither did, nor could appear to her perfectly just. She resigned, however, all intention of seeking to convince him that he was accusing one unconscious how she had

deserved it; and with a smile of genuine and unreproaching affection, was content to be again received into favour on his own ungracious terms.

As soon as Sir Patrick had overcome his first astonishment at the discovery of the imposition which had been practised upon him, he turned towards Christina, and solemnly demanded why she had thought proper so unaccountably to mislead him?"

"Really, Sir Patrick, it is so long ago," answered she, giddily, "that I can hardly tell.—However, I only half misled you."

"How so? Did you not in plain terms assert, that the lady was your governess?"

"Why so she is! She governs me by my own choice; and more despotically than ever yet was don— by the stoutest compulsion!"

Whilst the baronet and his little kinswoman were settling this dispute, Adela, who heard her brother say that he had another engagement, and meant to go away early, drew him aside, to ask if he had heard lately from Bath?

"Yes; I had a letter three days ago: my father is quite recovered, and writes in

good spirits, but seems to have no immediate intention of coming to town. I will bring you his letter to-morrow. He asks whether you are still in Hertford Street, for I have not had the grace to send him a single line since you left me!"

"Were I but permitted to become his correspondent," cried Adela, "how infinitely more punctual he should find me!"

"Ah, this is all very pretty talking! But if you were to be as much put out of humour as I have been, this last fortnight, with the very person you most wished to write with kindness about, I fancy you would find your diligence considerably checked!"

"Dear Julius—was your anger against me the cause of your silence?"

"To be sure it was!—I must be a villain indeed to sit down and abuse you to my father; and yet, if I had allowed myself to mention your name, I should infallibly have done it in such a way as would have led him to suspect something wrong."

"But you now mean to write very soon, do you not?"

"Yes; perhaps to-night when I go home, or, at latest, to-morrow."

"Then," said Adela, smiling, "I am assured of being again in complete favour. To know this, I shall hereafter always enquire whether you have sent off any recent dispatches to my father."

"You need travel no such circuitous road, I promise you. Look but in my countenance, and that will always tell you the disposition I am in, without the trouble of a single enquiry. I know not the man or woman in existence for whom I would be at the pains of disguising my real feelings a moment. But, good night. I was pleased with your note, and am heartily glad that we are friends again:—so glad, indeed, as now hardly to regret having encountered all this crazy, fantastical noise, which they call music. Marrow-bones and cleavers, to my ears, would be celestial harmony compared to it!"

He then hastened away; and Jemima, soon after, approaching Adela, said—

"Was ever any thing more provoking than the endless duration of this odious concert?"

"Has it condemned you to too long a silence?"

"Oh, I have not paid it the compliment of being silent at all, I assure you! But don't you remember the engagement we were to have kept, had it concluded in tolerable time?"

"At least, I remember no particular reason for so much regretting that engagement."

"My dearest cousin, you really have not the smallest feeling for one's cruellest disappointments! I recollect perfectly having told you how fully I expected to meet a certain gentleman; and that, you know, is now entirely out of the question."

"But I did not know," said Adela, "that a little procrastination, in an interview of this sort, might not double all its charms."

"Now, pray, do not make a jest of my distress! I assure you that I never was more mortified in my life. Ah, you will learn to understand, some day or other, how painful these little vexations, as you now think them, are to a feeling heart!"

"Pray do not prophesy such evil things to me! You shall have all the commiseration you can desire, without holding out to

me the threat of becoming a member of your own piteous corps!"

"But now, seriously speaking, is it not the most intolerable grievance in the world, to be kept at home by such a tiresome succession of mad *capriccios*, when one is dying to be in another place?"

"Perhaps you have deserved the penance by some mad *capriccios* of your own. Have you never treated the *certain gentleman* in question with any specimens of these?"

"Oh, never, never! He is too superior, too exalted in mind, in manners, in rank, in every thing, to be treated for a single instant with flightiness, or disrespect. How I wish that you could see him!"

"Perhaps, I might not find it very safe to see him."

"Yes, I think you would, for you don't at all give me the idea of a person likely to fall very desperately in love."

"Do you pity or envy my supposed insensibility?"

"I scarcely know!" replied Jemima, sighing deeply, and assuming an air of pensive dejection.—"A tender heart, no doubt,

exposes us to many sorrows; but I know not that I would exchange it for the torpor of indifference!"

Adela, weary of so sentimental a dialogue, and, long since, fully satisfied with the unsolicited share of this young lady's confidence to which she had been admitted, now left her to the indulgence of a romantic reverie, and strolled to another part of the room.

CHAP. V.

RECOGNITION.

A few days after poor Barbara's unwelcome and decried concert, Adela accompanied the General, her aunt, and Jemima, to a great dinner-party, at a house where she was an entire stranger, and which nothing but the express desire of her uncle would have induced her to enter. Jemima was as reluctant to accept this formal invitation as her less dissipated cousin, and liberally bestowed upon it the usual epithets which a certain class of young ladies always do bestow upon every thing that they think disagreeable; she called it a detestable bore, a monstrous plague, an odious imposition! and even envied her eldest sister the regale of dining with her aunt at Hampton. These ebullitions of discontent, probably, had their use; for when the time came for departing,

Jemima had tired herself by her own murmurs, and ascended the carriage, dressed most becomingly, and looking remarkably pretty, (which circumstances, doubtless, had also their reconciling effects) with infinitely less averseness than Adela, who had scarcely spoken a word against the inevitable visit.

Theirs was the last party that arrived: the splendid drawing-room was already filled with guests, and it appeared, by the immediate order given on their entrance for dinner, that the company had been kept waiting merely on their account.

Adela looked around in vain for a face she had ever seen before: but Jemima was more fortunate, and speedily found out, and became engaged in conversation with several persons she knew. Presently, however, coming behind her cousin's chair, she whispered—

"They tell me, that Lord Ennerdale is amongst the group of gentlemen near that window!"

"I give you joy," said Adela.

"Oh, I am wild to be assured of it! How little did I think that so great a plea-

sure awaited me! What happiness it will be, if he should sit next me!"

"You have my best wishes that he may. I am sorry that I cannot give you any more effectual assistance."

"There are very few girls here," said Jemima, pleased with her answer; "that would give me half as much."

They were now summoned to descend to the eating-room; and, as they passed the gentlemen collected near the door, Adela was confirmed in her conjecture that the stranger with whom she had conversed at Mrs. Elmer's ball was Lord Ennerdale, by beholding him amongst the number, and hearing Jemima, in a low voice, say—

"There he stands! Do look at him. Is he not very handsome?"

"Yes, but I hope he is not quite so well persuaded of it as you are!"

At table, th eluck less Jemima, in defi-nce of all her manœuvering to obtain a seat near him, was compelled to accept a vacancy between an old lady and her married son, at the greatest possible distance from him. Her vexation was sufficiently obvious; and Adela, had she sup-

posed her own place would have been deemed any better, most readily would have resigned it: but it was equally remote from the spot Jemima wished to occupy; and her neighbours, instead of an old lady and her married son, were a deaf officer, and an insipid-looking girl, who, to every thing that was said, answered in monosyllables; and seemed totally divested of all aim, save that of not omitting to taste a single dish at the table.

Thus unenviably closed in, ashamed as well as provoked to observe the determined sullenness of Jemima's aspect, and incapable of doing such honour to the sumptuous entertainment before them, as her laconic neighbour, Adela directed her attention to whatever part of the table seemed to furnish the best conversation. She found none that interested her so particularly as a debate amicably carried on by two or three gentlemen at some distance, relative to the characteristic differences between Scottish and Welsh scenery. She had herself been in the former country, and knowing, either by description or by sight, several of the spots to which they were alluding, she

became unwilling to lose a word; and not the less so, for finding that the subject had attracted likewise the attention of Lord Ennerdale, who very soon became a party engaged in the discussion. His animation, his brilliant powers of description, the flowing and easy elegance of his language, and, perhaps, more than all, the charm communicated to every sentence he uttered, by the manly sweetness of his voice, gradually drew, and fixed towards that part of the table, the delighted attention of every one present. The deaf old officer alone, broke in occasionally upon a conversation which the rest of the company shewed such solicitude to hear without interruption. He saw that something more entertaining than usual was passing; he read upon every countenance, pleasure and approbation; and he observed that no one was a more devoted auditor than Adela. To her, then, giving her repeated jogs with his elbow, he continually applied—

"Hey? What was that? What is he saying now? What are they talking of?"

And she, too well bred, as well as too good-humoured to give him a direct rebuff,

yet cruelly annoyed, found no resource, but in trying to make him understand by signs, that she would satisfy his curiosity when the conversation came to a pause.

The first disposition to mirth visible upon the face of Jemima throughout the whole repast, was excited by this scene; and before Adela had time to feel angry at her evident enjoyment of the persecution she was undergoing, a smile upon the countenance of Lord Ennerdale caught her eye, which so irresistibly impelled her to sympathy, that, forgetting all previous vexation, she was seized with an inclination to laugh more uncontrollable than that of either of her mischievous observers. Mrs. Cleveland looked indignant; the General enquired what was the joke; the elderly ladies all appeared scandalized at the silly girl's flighty airs; Jemima tittered with redoubled glee; the men regarded Adela with surprise, thought her a fool, but a pardonable, because a very handsome one; and the misses screwed up their pretty mouths with marked disdain of such true rural breeding. Lord Ennerdale, conscious of the share he had borne in exciting all this disapprobation,

was by no means slow in seeking to repair the error. He resumed the subject which, for a while, had been suspended, and resumed it with such spirit, such vivacity, and even eloquence, that his auditors, wholly captivated, forgot poor Adela's involuntary trespass—and what was far more difficult, she was allured to forget it herself!

When, at length, the ladies rose to retire, Jemima, approaching her cousin, attempted some apology for the wicked pleasure which she had taken in her distress:

"But really, the blunt, loud questions of that jogging old Colonel, and your useless endeavours to keep him quiet, were not to be resisted! And, after all, it was not the sight of my risibility that provoked you to laughter, but the expressive smile of Lord Ennerdale; and if you could have withstood it, you must have been made of stone."

No theme was now expatiated upon in this circle of females, except that of Lord Ennerdale, and no praise seemed too enthusiastic to bestow upon his various merits. Some spoke of his incomparable colloquial talents; others extolled his unequalled politeness; the younger individuals of the

assembly were lavish in praise of the gracefulness of his bow; and their mothers descanting on his character in private life, seemed tempted to consider as the greatest misfortune attending the loss of their own youth, the barrier that circumstance opposed to their forming any hopes of achieving his conquest themselves.

Some of the dinner-guests remained stationary during the evening, and, amongst others, Mrs. Cleveland and her party; new visitors also arrived, and by the time a detachment of the gentlemen from below ascended to join the ladies, a large company was assembled.

Lord Ennerdale was one of those who thought proper to make his re-appearance. Adela, when he entered, was standing amidst a group of girls who seemed all to be thrown into a flutter by his approach. She herself, though from a very different cause, was not wholly exempt from perturbation. She thought of the bitter resentment which her speaking to him on a former occasion, had, as she believed, awakened in her brother; she anticipated what might result from any renewal of the

conference, should that imperious brother become apprised of it; and, in consequence of these reflections, quietly withdrawing to a seat, she determined to avoid as much as possible all intercourse with so interdicted an acquaintance.

Meanwhile his lordship advancing towards the party she had just quitted, addressed to those who stood nearest, some questions about the Opera; enchanted several of the circle by saying that he had had the pleasure of seeing them once or twice in Kensington Gardens; asked Jemima, who was always most forward to answer him, whether she continued her rides on horseback; and then, adverting to what had passed at dinner, he gaily reproached her for so uncharitably contributing to heighten the confusion occasioned by the persevering interrogations of the deaf Colonel.

"Oh, my lord," cried she, "do not seek to screen yourself by casting the blame upon me! I protest, the unfortunate laughter never moved a muscle till she caught your eye, and beheld the look of mock commiseration with which you regarded her."

"Instead of commiseration," replied he, "my countenance ought rather to have expressed a wish to congratulate her on being judged the only individual patient and amiable enough, in so large a company, to endure, without resentment, such lasting persecution."

"Why now, my lord, do you really believe, that if the veriest shrew in creation had been sitting next to the old man, he would have tormented her at all less? He made it no part of his business to study the humour with which his importunity was borne; all he aimed at was to appease his own restless curiosity."

Lord Ennerdale perceiving by this speech, that praise of another, however indirect, was far from being acceptable to his fair auditress, now waved the subject. He enquired after her brother, and regretted that they so seldom met; and then, alluding to their recent abode at Hampton, asked what had been their inducement for paying a visit into the country at so uninviting a season? Jemima, exulting in the duration of his conference with her, could not even conceal the vanity and self-importance to which it

gave birth. Her eyes roved in a thousand directions to remark who noticed her triumph; she became every instant more glaringly affected, more voluble, and more childishly solicitous to shew off; and, by degrees, drew around her such a circle of inquisitive observers, that Adela, who saw from the place where she sat, all that passed, thought she never could sufficiently congratulate herself on having effected so well-timed a retreat from her vicinity.

The entrance of a new claimant to notice at length changed the face of affairs, and completely eclipsed the brightness of poor Jemima's transient honours. This personage was Mrs. Elmer, the lady at whose house Adela had spent an evening which terminated so memorably.

Mrs. Elmer, with very slender pretensions to either beauty or talents, possessed an influence in society so securely established, that it was vain for any younger competitor suddenly to think of outvying her. She was at the head of a splendid establishment, gave numerous and superb entertainments, and was connected with some of the most powerful personages in minis-

terial authority. What further confirmed her consequence, was the easy assurance with which she invariably laid claim to it. She was not to be charged with decided insolence; but a slight from any one she had ever distinguished, or an attempt to evade those attentions to which she deemed herself entitled, were injuries she was scarcely capable of forgiving. She had a rage for patronizing, that sometimes produced offices of real service, but oftener effected nothing more than blank disappointment, after having exacted the most fatiguing and assiduous attendance. Lord Ennerdale, amongst those who frequented her house with the most uniform security of a constant welcome, held the highest place in her real regard; and was, perhaps, the only exception she admitted to her declared rule of not suffering young men to avow, in her presence, a will or opinion differing from her own. He scrupled not to hold *many* opinions decidedly incompatible with those she professed; and manifested on various occasions, an inflexibility of volition that would have rendered her the bitterest foe of any other culprit: but he seemed

privileged, without effort, to keep possession of that place in her good graces, which so many others, with all the diligence they could exert, failed to preserve.

In the room adjoining to that in which the majority of the company was assembled, a small *coterie* of young ladies, weary of Jemima's long flirtation, had gathered round a piano-forte, and sought a resource from *ennui* in music. Adela soon joined this party, and was listening with great delight to a modest and charming girl who, at the joint entreaty of her companions, had been prevailed upon to sing, when Mrs. Elmer and Lord Ennerdale stole softly into the room. The former smiled and curtseyed with infinite graciousness to Adela, and then, after whispering something to her noble escort, they both became silently attentive to the interesting performer.

The song being ended, Lord Ennerdale drew nearer to the instrument, and complimented the blushing musician in terms so judicious, and spoke on the subject with such feeling and good taste, that the young lady, and all her associates, declared they

had great suspicions he was a performer himself. He laughingly, but most positively protested the contrary; Mrs. Elmer, however, confirming their conjectures by asserting, that it was otherwise impossible to account for his possessing so much judgment about the matter, he was teased, with such perseverance, to give them a specimen of his abilities, that, at last, he said, if any of them would dance, he would play a hornpipe! And immediately, with *one hand*, and the most comic affectation of seriousness, he puzzled out the very notes to which, so many years before, the pretended harper's son had danced at Mrs. Somerville's. Adela started at the well-remembered air, and whilst her eyes were fixed upon him, and she was wondering where he also could have heard this uncouth melody, he directed towards her a glance of observation so keen, that, shrinking, half-abashed, she sheltered herself behind one of her young companions, and more than ever perplexed herself to divine his meaning in the selection of so obsolete a strain.

Much laughing applause followed his

humble performance, and he was eagerly pressed for a second proof of his skill.

"Oh, if this does not content you," cried he, "you almost deserve to be punished (as I have known some others) by hearing the very tune I have been so brilliantly performing, twanged for a quarter of an hour upon a villainous harp, during the vehement exertions to keep measure to it, of a boy professedly—deaf and dumb!"

Adela again, and involuntarily, stepped forward, and again her eyes met those of Lord Ennerdale, in which the most expressive significance appeared. Every body begged for a more detailed account of the strange dancer to whom he had alluded; and with great humour, he gave an exact description of the boy's grotesque appearance; of his total disregard of the wonder he excited, and of his unsolicited readiness to display his accomplishments. Then, with more seriousness, he spoke of the sweetness and good-humour with which the loveliest and most admired young female in the room, had condescended to become the boy's caterer, and to honour him with her personal services and attention!

This relation was heard with pleasure by all present, Adela alone excepted. She now felt convinced, that he had obtained his information at Rosedown Court, from Mr. or Mrs. Somerville; but ashamed to find herself exalted into the heroine of the tale, she once more retreated out of sight, and sincerely wished the conversation at an end.

Some time after, whilst she was sitting at a little distance from the group round the instrument, Mrs. Elmer approached her; she was followed by Lord Ennerdale, and said, with a smile,

"I have been upbraided, Miss Cleveland, for not availing myself, in right of the introduction which I owe to your uncle's kindness at my house the other evening, of the privilege I now possess of presenting to you my own friends. Lord Ennerdale is solicitous for the honour of your acquaintance, and begs me to be his usher and interpreter on the occasion."

Adela bowed, but without speaking; and the Earl said,

"I have already trespassed on the goodness of Miss Cleveland, and intruded myself

upon her notice, under the plea of being acquainted with her sister; but I own, I was anxious for a more immediate and visible patroness to authorize my desire of conversing with her."

He then placed himself on the sofa beside her, and Mrs. Elmer, in a few minutes, walked away.

"Have not I," said he, after a short silence, "an astonishing and most accurate memory in recording past occurrences? I fear your recollection of former times, and former friends, is by no means so faithful."

"Every real friend I now possess," cried Adela, zealous to defend herself, "has been such of long standing; and with me," added she, smiling, "the most infallible test of true friendship, is its wearing the venerable rust of antiquity."

"Shall I hazard to name one, at least, amongst your past associates, whom you appear wholly to have discarded from your remembrance?"

"Pray speak clearly, my lord."

"Had you not,—it is now, I acknowledge, long, long since—had you not, in

days of yore, a playmate, a companion, a fellow ward at your excellent guardian's, named Algernon Mordington ?"

" And has your lordship taken all this trouble," said Adela, smiling, " to convict me of having forgotten Algernon ?"

" He complains," resumed the Earl, " that you speak to him, and know not with whom you are conversing; that you look at him, and remember not a single feature in his face; that you meet him, and consider him as an utter stranger !"

" Tell him, my lord, that in answer to these heavy charges, I have to plead, that it is ten years since I have seen him. The disguise in which he appeared at my sister's sufficiently accounts for my blindness on that occasion ; and in his own proper person, he has never made himself known to me since he quitted Dr. Hampden's."

" But allow me to ask—how is it, that even his present name appears also to be unknown to you ?"

" I may have heard it often, but without suspecting that it belongs to one whom I formerly knew under any other."

" Shall I more explicitly make you ac-

quainted with it? And will you then promise to stretch forth towards him, wherever he may meet you, the hand of an unaltered friend?"

"I will with pleasure."

"Then now—this very now," cried he, with great animation, "give me my just due! I would not forfeit the promised boon for the wealth of worlds!"

Adela had been gradually prepared, during the progress of this dialogue, to anticipate its leading to some such conclusion, and affected not an astonishment which she did not feel: but her satisfaction at gaining the certainty of being again in the presence of one of her earliest and most partially-remembered favourites, she had no hesitation in manifesting with the frankest cheerfulness; and Lord Ennerdale, the same quick-feeling and grateful character she had ever known him, was enchanted by a reception so much more consonant with his wishes than his hopes.

"I was under no small apprehension," cried he, "that when assured of my identity with the Mordington so obnoxious to some of your family, you would have looked

upon me with an estranged and repulsive aspect. But in every instance, how alike do I find you to your amiable and unprejudiced sister! Tell me, dear Miss Cleveland, am I, for the cordiality you have deigned to shew me, under obligation to her representations, or do I owe it solely to your own impartial candour?"

"If there is any merit," replied Adela, "in the welcome I have given you, let me do myself the justice to declare that it is all my own! I have not received a single line from my sister since I had last the pleasure of seeing you."

"I should be far from undervaluing," resumed he, "any good office I might experience from Mrs. Somerville; yet, on the present occasion, I have infinitely more satisfaction in thinking I am indebted only to yourself."

He then rallied her on the surprise and evident displeasure her countenance had manifested at Mrs. Elmer's ball, during the time he stood by the dancers and watched her.

"I was well aware," proceeded he, "that I was trespassing, in some degree, against

the rules of strict good breeding; but the pleasure of again seeing you, and the desire of ascertaining how long you would continue to view me as a complete stranger, silenced my scruples, and detained me still at your side. I find now, that nothing less than becoming my own herald, would have discovered me to you."

"I perceive," said Adela, smiling, "that you are a little piqued at my sluggishness of memory; but I do assure you, that if you had been denied the use of a looking-glass for ten or eleven years, and then had suddenly beheld your own figure, (I mean nothing in disparagement of its present appearance) you would not have known yourself! And yet there was something in the character of your countenance, whilst you sat talking with me at supper, that once or twice reminded me of a face I had somewhere seen before; and had I been less precipitately hurried away, I might, in the course of further conversation, have fully recollected you."

She then directed the conversation to the subject of Dr. Hampden and his family; and the Earl acknowledged with contrition

his late remissness in writing to them. He inquired separately after every member of the "beloved household;" and was anxious to hear Adela's opinion of the new relation introduced by the marriage of Ruth into the deserving group.

"All that I have hitherto heard or seen of him," answered she, "induces me to hope he fully merits the happy lot he has attained."

He would, after this, have spoken of his sister, and was beginning to express his regret that her absence from town, at the present moment, precluded the possibility of obtaining for her an introduction to Miss Cleveland; when Jemima, who had for some time been in search of Adela, and now hastily approached, put an end to their dialogue.—She addressed her cousin with ill-disguised vexation, and said—"Our carriage has been announced a great while; and when you are at leisure to go, mamma begs that you will inform her."

"I am ready this instant," cried Adela, immediately rising.

"I wonder who can have had an interest," said Lord Ennerdale, turning to

Jemima with an air of playful incredulity, "to bribe the servant to deliver this intelligence in an inaudible whisper!"

"I assure you, my lord, it was delivered in a voice loud enough to be heard by every body—who chose to hear it!"

"I am happy then, that it reached not this spot, since thus you have been allured to it yourself."

This well-timed little piece of gallantry, recalled a few of the banished dimples into the countenance of Jemima; and Lord Ennerdale, attending her and Adela to the adjoining room, waited whilst they paid their parting compliments to the lady of the house, and then escorted them down stairs, and handed them into their carriage.

As soon as they drove from the door: "My dear cousin," cried Jemima, addressing Adela, "you have no idea how surprised I was to find you in that back room, holding so snug a *tête-à-tête* with Lord Ennerdale! Who in the world introduced him to you?"

"Miss Cleveland, perhaps," observed her aunt, dryly, "was not aware of the necessity of waiting for any introduction at all!"

"Come, come," interposed the General, "I must beg, that no such rustic ignorance may be attributed to her! The society to which she has been accustomed at Mrs. Somerville's was calculated to teach her all the usual forms observed by people of fashion."

"Then, I must say, she is the less excusable for her breach of étiquette to-night."

"I hope, madam," said Adela, with proud tranquillity, "you will acquit me of having been guilty of any impropriety, when you are told, that Mrs. Elmer brought Lord Ennerdale up to me, and introduced him at his own request."

"Mrs. Elmer!" repeated Jemima. "Dear, I wonder what could make her so condescendingly officious! However, cousin Adela, it is no more than right to tell you, that your brother and Lord Ennerdale are upon the most notoriously bad terms, and that you cannot do any thing that will give Julius greater offence, than to encourage his lordship's acquaintance."

"I am no stranger," said Adela, "to the animosity that subsisted between them when they were boys: but I had hoped that,

as men, they had discontinued such foolish dissentions."

"Oh, heaven, how little you know of the matter!—Why, did you never hear of their duel?"

"Their duel!" re-echoed the dismayed Adela.

"Yes;—they fought about the Earl's late wife,—an odious creature!—Julius was wounded pretty severely, and kept his room four or five weeks."

"My dearest uncle," cried Adela, earnestly appealing to the General—"is Jemima really correctly informed? Must I indeed believe, that Lord Ennerdale and my brother proceeded to such unjustifiable, such terrible excesses?"

"It is out of my power," replied the General, "to disprove my daughter's intelligence; and equally so, let me add, to account for her thus unnecessarily harassing your feelings by the communication."

"Dear papa," cried Jemima, in one of her softest tones of conciliation, "I would not, I am sure, for the world, say any thing to my cousin for the mere purpose of giving her pain! But in this case, you know, it

is absolutely requisite to put her upon her guard; since there cannot be a doubt of the deep resentment with which, not only Julius, but his father, would hear of her seeming to distinguish Lord Ennerdale in the slightest degree.

General Cleveland chose to admit this apology in silence, and Adela, though in a most anxious state of impatience for fuller information, suppressed all further enquiries till they reached home, and she was furnished with an opportunity of questioning Jemima by herself.

That young lady was by no means backward to give her every degree of satisfaction in her power.

The object on whose account the duel was fought, she had already stated, was Lord Ennerdale's wife. "But," proceeded she, "it was no affair of gallantry which provoked the challenge; your brother, on the contrary, hated the proud Mrs. Mordington (for her husband had not then succeeded to his uncle's title). Her insolent manners, her arrogant consciousness of high birth and superior beauty, made him completely sick of her the very first or second

time he was in her company; yet she never, I believe, was personally rude to him, till one evening that they met at a private masquerade, when Julius, it was reported, intentionally affronted her!"

"Oh, let me fervently hope," cried Adela, "that such a circumstance cannot be possible!"

"Why, surely, my dear cousin, you don't take the part of that hateful woman against your own brother! I dare aver, that whatever he said to her, she amply deserved. I have heard mamma relate, that at the moment Julius first recognized her, she was walking about in a mask with a man of known profligacy, whose attentions to her had for some time been the subject of a great deal of scandalous animadversion. Your brother spoke to her, at first, with due civility, but in a manner that proved he was fully aware who she was. Displeased at being accosted at all, she turned petulantly from him, and said something to her companion, which, though Julius only in part overheard, he was much exasperated by, and determined to punish. With that design, he harassed her with his unwished

attendance whichever way she directed her steps; addressed her several times in the most sarcastic manner, and whenever he did so, took care to pronounce her name loud enough to be distinctly heard by every bystander. Mrs. Mordington, driven almost to madness by this persecution, and at length seeing her husband entering the room, flew to him, and vehemently complained of having been insulted. Julius stood near during her angry accusation, listening to it with a calm and supercilious smile; and when the astonished husband applied to him for an explanation of what had passed, he thought proper, I am afraid, to give him some irritating answer,—on which an immediate challenge ensued."

"And did no one interfere?" cried the agitated Adela, "Did no one step forward as a mediator between them?"

"Dear, what could any body do? The defiance was given in a whisper, and immediately afterwards they separated, and affected to enter into all the gaiety of the place. But what think you of Mrs. Mordington's valorous admirer, who bore all your brother's innuendoes so patiently, and

drove her to seek reparation for the impertinence she had incurred on his own account, from the husband he was perhaps meditating to injure!"

"I think not of so contemptible a wretch at all!—But tell me, when and where did the two antagonists meet to settle their direful quarrel?"

"They fought the next day in some retired fields a little way out of London; and as soon as your brother's convalescence was ascertained, Mr. Mordington carried his wife down into the country, and placed her under the vigilant superintendance of her mother. It is asserted, that the old lady, who piques herself on entertaining the highest notions of female decorum, and wants the world to believe, 'that all the men of her race have been brave, and all the women virtuous,' was so liberal of her lectures and exhortations to this crest-fallen daughter, that she tormented her into a nervous fever, from which she never recovered."

"I cannot help observing, my dear Jemima," said Adela, "that you are not very prone to believe the least unfavourable parts

of a story! I have always heard an excellent character of this lady; she has been to her niece, Miss Eudocia Mordington, quite a parent, and the best and most affectionate of friends."

"Well, I only repeat to you what I have heard: I am sure, I care very little about her formal ladyship; she always looks as if she was practising to rival the graces of a drill-sergeant.—So upright! so stiff! I never see her without thinking of an expression in Madame d'Arblay's Camilla:—*Break she may—but bend she cannot!* Besides, she is immensely proud, and imbibes prejudices and antipathies with as little remorse as the sternest old prude in existence."

"I leave her then to your mercy," said Adela; "but before we terminate this conversation, tell me, what family did Mrs. Mordington leave?"

"Only a little boy and girl, who are twins. I should like of all things to see them; but at present, I believe, they are in the country."

"Well," said Adela, "I must now, with many thanks for your communications, release you, my dear Jemima, and bid you

good night: I have no great hope of enjoying a similar blessing myself, for the tale to which I have been listening, has, I doubt not, effectually *murdered sleep*."

As there was nobody present to witness her soothing sympathy, Jemima remitted the ceremony of appearing much concerned at this assurance, and with sufficient carelessness, telling Adela she hoped her prognostics would not be fulfilled, she snatched one parting look at her own figure in the dressing-glass, and retired.

CHAP. VI.

WRANGLING.

In confused, perturbed slumbers, haunted by a succession of the most terrifying visions, Adela spent the uneasy night, and arose pale and unrefreshed, yet anxious to calm her mind by an immediate communication of its feelings to Mrs. Somerville.

The letter which, with that view, she had concluded and sealed before any of the family descended to breakfast, was written in these words:

"Every day, every hour, my dearest Elinor, I more and more earnestly wish for your arrival in town. You are, when near, the sweetest friend, companion, and adviser in the world; but when absent, the most tardy and reluctant correspondent. Why is this, my loved sister? Why is one who writes so well, so lamentably unwilling to

write at all? Ah, do not on the present occasion, at least, withhold from me the benefit of your counsel, and the advantage of learning how you would conduct yourself were you placed in circumstances similar to mine.

"I have discovered who the nobleman is, with whom, as I informed you, I held so inexplicable a conference at Mrs. Elmer's ball. He made himself known to me last night, and it was with all the sincerity of unforgotten friendship, that I rejoiced in the conviction that I once again beheld Algernon Mordington. But how speedily, my dearest sister, was this satisfaction embittered! This very Algernon, I am told, has sought my brother's life! Ever at variance even from their earliest years, the progress of reason in their manhood, has had no influence over their vindictive passions; and menaces that affright and shock me are held out to deter me from exasperating the latent rancour of Julius, by cultivating the slightest intercourse with his detested foe! Heaven knows, this is a moment when I have no dread so great as that of again encountering him! The im-

pression made upon my mind by the detail of his sanguinary contest with a brother very dear to me, in despite of all his faults, is too recent to have lost any of its horror. But, gradually, no doubt, it will subside: and then I ask myself, how it will be possible perpetually to slight, to treat as a total stranger, one I have known so long, and from whom, individually, I never received any but offices of kindness? Julius has great claims upon me; but has he a right to prescribe to me a system of endless injustice? *You*, my Elinor, and Mr. Somerville have commenced an intimacy with Lord Ennerdale, even subsequently to the hated duel; *I* wish merely, not to discontinue abruptly the acquaintance established between us so many years preceding that grievous event.

"Fear, simply, and unmixed with the sisterly attachment I bear to Julius, causes no part of my indecision how to act. I am not a coward, though I shrink with pain from the risk of offending those I love. Could my brother injure me in my father's opinion, far more irreparably than I suspect him to be capable, on any provoca-

tion, of attempting, it is not the interested consideration of what I might hereafter suffer from that circumstance, which would fetter the freedom I now deem myself authorised to claim, of chusing my own friends. Under my father's roof, doubtless, the case would be widely different; nay, I readily allow, it would be widely different, were he to signify to me, from any part of the world, his express commands. But am I bound to adopt all the enmities of Julius upon the bare supposition that my father may require it? You will scarcely, I think, sanction so absurd an idea. Yet, if you conjecture, that my evincing any disposition to remain upon good terms with Lord Ennerdale, will inflame the animosity of my brother, or lay a foundation for fresh disagreements, speak freely, my dearest sister, and let me, whilst it is yet time, be put upon my guard against the danger of committing so great an imprudence.

"Our pretty cousin, the insinuating, and, on some occasions, sentimental, Jemima, appears deeply captivated by this formidable Lord Ennerdale. She endures with pain to hear him speak to any body but

herself, and exhorts me with a solicitude that almost provokes me to smile, to beware of incensing my brother by shewing the Earl too much civility. I am duly grateful for her cautions, but not quite so blind as she perhaps imagines, respecting their real motive. As to the reasons he may have given her for aspiring exclusively to his attention, it is neither my business, nor my wish to enquire into them. I pity her, if she is weak enough to love him without a prospect of requital; and I blame her, if, with a certainty of being preferred, she is distrustful enough to eye with jealousy every woman he may occasionally address. At all events, she is inexcuseable for viewing his undesigning cordiality to me with even a shadow of apprehension; the only light in which, with justice, it can be considered, is that of a cheerful renewal of an early and almost fraternal regard.

"And now, dearest Elinor, with fresh supplications for a speedy answer to the most material parts, at least, of this anxious consultation, I must hasten to sign myself,

your ever most grateful, confiding, and attached,

"ADELA CLEVELAND."

The hope she entertained that this letter would procure for her, in a few days, such judicious instructions for the regulation of her conduct as might equally preserve her from self-reproach, or the blame of others, re-animated her spirits; and she repaired to her uncle's breakfast-table, at the usual hour, with scarcely any traces remaining on her countenance of the disquieting thoughts that had oppressed her.

Upon the General, nearly every impression was transient. He had already forgotten the discussion which had occurred in the coach, and which, at the moment, had appeared to give him, on Adela's behalf, some concern. None being now obvious on her brow, none was present to his recollection. He chatted with his accustomed easy vivacity, played with his little girl; read aloud a few paragraphs from the morning paper, asked Adela what were Mrs. Cleveland's engagements for the evening,

and re-urged her, though with as little success as on former occasions, to make him her banker whenever she had any demands for money. She constantly assured him, that the allowance granted to her by her father, was fully adequate to her wants; and felt an unconquerable reluctance to receive pecuniary obligations from any hand but that of a parent.

In her way after breakfast to her undisputed place of refuge, the school-room, she entered, for a few minutes, the apartment occupied by Mrs. Cleveland, to borrow from Barbara a temporary supply of some particular sort of drawing-paper. Whilst engaged in turning over the portfolio which contained it, she heard Jemima settling with her mother a plan for going that morning to view a panorama, which, from the high praise universally bestowed upon it, Adela felt a great desire to obtain a sight of herself. She therefore requested, if there was room in the carriage, that she might be permitted to accompany them; and receiving to this solicitation, the first which she had ever made of the kind, as gracious an assent as she had expected, she left

the room, promising to be ready whenever they were so good as to let her know the carriage was arrived.

A hurrying message, deferred so long, that it appeared as if she had been nearly forgotten, summoned her at three o'clock to run down, and step into the carriage after her aunt, Barbara and Jemima had already taken their seats. She made not the slightest observation upon their suspected want of memory, nor even chose to appear conscious of it; but joined occasionally in the conversation which the three ladies kept up, and arrived at the place of exhibition with a temper as placid as her countenance.

The room to which, with much climbing, and many murmurs at the gloominess of the stairs they had to toil up, was crowded with company, and fresh parties were continually arriving to supply the vacancies caused by others which were successively departing. Amongst the latter, a group of gentlemen, whose voices only proclaimed their vicinity, encountered the Clevelands in the very darkest part of the winding ascent. No obscurity, however, could screen from Jemima's detection, her ad-

mired Lord Ennerdale; she knew him, it almost appeared, by the sound of his steps, for she scarcely waited to hear him speak, before she eagerly pronounced his name, and added in an accent of the most flattering concern —"Are you already going?"

"Who is it?" demanded the Earl, "that does me the honour, amidst this *darkness visible*, to know me?"

Barbara, seizing the occasion to be poetical too, now answered, "*Not to know you*, my lord, *would argue ourselves unknown!*"

"Am I not addressing," resumed he, "one of the Miss Clevelands?"

"*Two* of the Miss Clevelands are here," cried Jemima, "and most anxious to prevail upon you to defer your departure a little longer."

"I shall be happy," replied he, "to conduct you from these doleful shades, to regions of more light and cheerfulness: but, at their very threshold, I must resign my charge, and hasten to attend a less pleasant, but more indispensable engagement."

He then, desiring his friends not to wait

for him, turned back, and offering one arm to Mrs. Cleveland, whom, through the dusk he had just distinguished, was spared the difficulty of deciding for himself to which of her daughters he should offer the other, by the promptitude with which, Jemima, without waiting to be asked, unhesitatingly made it her own property.

Adela, meanwhile, silently followed, half in doubt, as affairs now stood, whether she ought not seriously to wish, that the Earl might quit them without observing her. But it could not be. On arriving at the entrance of the room containing the picture, having made his bow to Mrs. Cleveland and her fair daughter, and turning to take leave of Barbara, whom he imagined wholly unaccompanied, he perceived Adela, and instantly went up to her.

"Are you here too, bright vision?" cried he; "how is it, that a succession of such cheering objects break upon my dazzled senses from amidst a gloom so dreary and unpromising?"

"The force of contrast," said Adela, "seems so particularly favourable to us,

that I suspect, it would be no bad policy were we always to steal thus from darkness into light."

During this speech, she had continued advancing, and was now in the midst of the spectators assembled to view the painting. Lord Ennerdale, forgetful of his pleaded engagement, kept close beside her; drew forth her remarks on what she was surveying; made some excellent criticisms himself, and explained to her with the greatest clearness, every striking object which she saw represented. So intelligent a guide could not fail to render the exhibition doubly entertaining to her; she was enchanted with its ingenuity, and extremely grateful to her noble escort for the useful and patient aid he lent her.

Thus engrossed, each seemed to forget the progress of time, and each evidently forgot the unfortunate effect which an attention so exclusively paid on one part, and so willingly received on the other, must produce upon the minds of the envious and observant Clevelands. The anger and mortification of Jemima, in particular, knew no bounds. She deigned not for one instant

to cast a glance at the picture, but intent on watching the amicable pair, she 'eyed them askance,' and benignly attributed to Adela every designing view, and every ambitious passion active and afloat in her own heart.

The signal was at length given by Mrs. Cleveland for their departure, and Lord Ennerdale, detaching himself from the more immediate vicinity of Adela, went up to her aunt again to offer her his assistance on the stairs. She affected, with the most natural air imaginable, great surprise at his sight.

"Have I the pleasure still to find your lordship here?" cried she, "I thought you had spoken of some indispensable engagement that would compel you to hasten away.—But, perhaps, you are only just returned from fulfilling it?—I do not remember having seen you till this moment, since we first entered."

"Probably you have been better employed than in attending to those around you," answered he. "But give me leave to take care of you in descending these steep and uneasy stairs. You will find me now a very experienced conductor."

"Jemima, my love," said the considerate mother, "you are so terribly careless in these awkward sort of places, that you always frighten me to death. Go round, and take hold of Lord Ennerdale on the other side."

Sullen and dissatisfied as she was, Jemima could not resist this intimation. She stepped nimbly forward, and secured the support she was not more desirous of obtaining for herself, than of withholding from Adela.

The storm, however, though it burst not forth at the very instant it had collected all its force, lost nothing of its fury by being, for a short period, suspended. Scarcely were the horses in motion after the coach door closed, before a joint attack was begun upon Adela, by both mother and daughter, so voluble and intemperate, that she was completely at a loss for several minutes, to discover what was the specific nature of their charge against her.

When, however, she *did* comprehend them, not to have felt mortified at the designs so injuriously imputed to her, would have been impossible: yet, to feel so in the

degree she would have done had their good opinion been more precious to her, was equally out of the question. At the same time she knew, that no sentiment the human countenance can indicate, is harder to be forgiven than contempt, and therefore studiously repelled every disposition to indulge such a feeling. But her unshaken self-command, which could neither be incited to tears by their injustice, nor provoked to passion by their acrimony, exasperated their pride beyond all bounds. Jemima, losing every remains of rationality, burst into an hysterical fit of sobbing, and exclaimed,

"Who could believe, to see you sitting there with that unfeeling look of composure, Miss Cleveland, that you had acted, by a relation and a friend who implicitly trusted you, so treacherous a part?—You knew, almost from the first day we met, the animated interest I feel for Lord Ennerdale;—I opened to you my whole heart; I was frank, confiding, and, unguarded, as, at my age, all artless characters are!—And how have you rewarded me?—Why, by seeking to insinuate yourself into his good graces; by endeavouring to supplant and undermine

me; by forming schemes, I verily believe, to meet him, as you have done this morning, by assignation!"

"Do not say, Jemima, that you believe so wild a charge," cried Adela; "it is impossible that it should have ever entered seriously into your imagination!"

"It is not at all impossible," retorted Jemima, nearly suffocated with rage.—"I begin to think you have art enough to do any thing.—You are lately come from a good school, and the lessons which you probably received in Scotland, don't seem to have been thrown away upon you!"

Every fibre in Adela's frame trembled at this vindictive and cruel insinuation; yet she had at once too much dignity to complain, and too much sense to betray how deeply it wounded her. She therefore let down the side-glass, and leaning forward as if to mark what was passing in the street, avoided hearing any thing further that was said, and reached home, to her great internal congratulation, without having sunk under the temptation of uttering with bitterness, a single expression which she could regret.

But a death-blow had now been given to the feeble regard she had entertained for Jemima, from which it could never recover. Petulance, or even injustice, might be forgiven—but malice was of a blacker nature, and left traces on the memory almost indelible. To have struck upon the only part where Adela was assailable,—where a wound would rankle,—where the slightest touch would keenly agonize,—this was so far exceeding what the provocation of jealousy could palliate, that she knew not how to attribute it to any thing short of a thoroughly bad heart.

It happened most unfortunately, that after so tempestuous a morning, an evening ensued, entirely devoid of engagements. The four ladies, unenlivened by the entrance of any visitors, assembled in the drawing-room at tea-time, to indulge at leisure their mutual dissatisfaction, and to canvass over their unsubsided grievances. Adela, very naturally, recoiled from performing such a penance with the most decided antipathy: but, without hazarding an irreparable breach with her aunt, there was no possibility of escaping the infliction; and

she armed herself with courage to endure it with as much forbearance as it was in her power.

Jemima, having condescended to make some slight apology for the impetuosity into which, as she said, the warmth of her feelings had hurried her in the morning, now, affecting great moderation, professed that her only wish was to talk the matter coolly over, and to attempt convincing her cousin of the perfidy there would be in seeking to seduce from her the partiality of Lord Ennerdale.

"In order to vindicate to your mother," said Adela, "every part of my conduct, as far as I have yet been implicated with Lord Ennerdale, I feel no reluctance to enter into the discussion you propose; yet, I must own, I almost disdain my own facility, and think I am submitting to an unreasonable degradation!—Why should you, upon such feeble grounds, ascribe to me any treacherous intentions?—You seem wholly ignorant, that Lord Ennerdale and I, once were inmates of the same house. The introduction which took place last night, led

only to the renewal of a former, not to the establishment of a new acquaintance. I had no suspicion at that moment, of the unhappy circumstance of his having ever had a hostile encounter with my brother; and though I was better informed this morning, would you have prescribed to me a gloomy and morose reserve, either perfectly unintelligible to him, or calculated only to prove, that I must, since we last parted, have imbibed in this family some powerful prejudice against him? Would that have been good policy, Jemima? Would he, do you suppose, have loved you the better for infusing ill-will into the mind of one of his earliest friends? But let me be honest; unactuated by any reflections of this kind, I listened to him with pleasure, because he entertained me; and I shall continue to conduct myself with good manners towards him, because I think such a repayment due for the politeness with which I am treated by him myself. I have no further aim whatever, and not the remotest wish to interfere with your projects. This is all I have to say, and all I ever mean to say,

upon so unpleasant a subject. For your own relief and comfort, endeavour to believe me."

To a statement, which though uttered with some pride, was so rational, and would, to a candid mind, have been so satisfactory, Jemima had little to oppose; yet, it was evident, she still harboured doubts, and still nourished apprehensions. She sighed; murmured at the suspense she was yet condemned to endure; and, at last, had the encroaching selfishness to require from her cousin, a promise that she would decline every invitation to the houses where there was a chance of meeting him.

"This," said she, "if you are sincere in your assurances of being exempt from all design, is not asking from you any great effort, and will be the most unequivocal proof of that sincerity which you can give."

"I can consent," answered Adela, coldly, "to give you no better security for my sincerity than my own simple asseveration. I am sorry you require proofs from me which it is totally contrary to my wish or meaning to afford you. I have gone no where with a view to seek Lord Ennerdale:

but neither will *I*, most assuredly, refrain from going any where purposely to avoid him."

"We may then," said Mrs. Cleveland, sarcastically, "perfectly estimate the degree of faith due to this young lady's magnanimous pretensions to absolute disinterestedness! I have always observed, that when persons have committed themselves by professing more than it might be convenient to perform, they are expert in discovering, at the moment of being called upon to act, some lucky pretext on which to found a plausible denial. The pretext, I imagine, which we are now to admit from Miss Cleveland, is that of the high sense of honour which forbids her consenting—as it did the heroic Falstaff—to sully the dignity of her own independence by performing any demand *upon compulsion!*"

This speech so aptly, yet ridiculously illustrated the real meaning of Adela's refusal to comply with her cousin's modest petition, that, overlooking its unauthorized severity, she thought only of its burlesque justice, and heard it with a laugh of unfeigned good-humour. She could have done nothing

that would so effectually have mollified the vain speaker; any indication of a genuine relish of her wit, was a sure passport to her, at least temporary, favour. She therefore, though with much gentleness and caution, began representing to her enamoured daughter, the misery she might be entailing upon herself, by cherishing, upon such uncertain grounds, a partiality so serious and so exclusive; she was proceeding, somewhat too unguardedly perhaps, to remind her how slight had been the encouragement which her passion had hitherto received, when Jemima, losing all patience, and regardless of all respect, indignantly interrupted her—

"How can you, madam," cried she, "have so little feeling as to talk to me in this manner? I am sure, till this moment, you have always held a very different language! It was you who first wished me to secure the conquest of Lord Ennerdale; who exhorted me to omit no means of captivating him; who led me about from house to house in chace of him; who have assisted in distancing every other woman who you thought had any chance of attracting

him! And now, do you preach tame circumspection to me? Do you. . ."

"Jemima, Jemima!" interrupted Mrs. Cleveland, "you totally forget yourself!—Are you in your senses?"

"Yes," replied the insolent daughter, "perfectly so: but since you provoke me to it, I *will* declare the truth, and let my cousin judge who has originally been the most to blame. Her laughing at your clever speeches, I perceive, has quite won you over to her cause: and I suppose you will end by saying, as papa did, when I complained to him about her this morning, that it will make very little difference to him, or to the family in general, whether Miss Adela Cleveland, his niece, or Miss Jemima Cleveland, his daughter, is the successful candidate for Lord Ennerdale's hand and title; he only wishes that one of the two may obtain the prize. How fatherly a declaration! And how much I am obliged to my cousin for the pains she takes, on all sides, to supplant me in the favour of those I love! Thank heaven, Julius, with all his partiality for her, will not, on this subject, be quite so ready to support her!"

Scarcely had she uttered this last sentence, when a quick rap at the street door arrested the attention of all present, and gave to Adela the joyful hope of a reprieve from the irksome conversation to which she had so long been constrained to listen.

CHAP. VII.

DETECTION.

In a few minutes, Julius Cleveland made his appearance—

"Why, what's the matter with you all?" cried he—"I never saw so sober and domestic a party; I hope it is more amusing than it looks! My aunt appears like the superior of some convent, giving lectures on the wisdom of seclusion, and the merit of humility, to two or three favoured novices, assembled with down-cast eyes, and in modest silence, to listen to her sapient precepts. And here sits one," tapping Barbara on the shoulder, "writing it all down in mystic characters, that no profane eye may be able to decypher it. What dost call these enigmatical pot-hooks, hey, my little Bab?"

Barbara, looking up from her employment (which was that of copying some very extraordinary signs and figures from a sheet

of folio paper spread at its full size upon the table before her) answered very gravely—

"I am transcribing a method of tachygraphy which has been lent me by one of my language-masters."

Julius burst into an unceremonious laugh—

"*One* of your language-masters? Why how many do you deal with at a time?"

"I have four just at present."

"Only four? And pray, what does each master drive out his predecessor's lesson with?"

"They do not all come on the same day."

"That may be lucky! But let us hear, what do they severally undertake to teach you?"

"Oh, no, for heaven's sake, don't ask her for their catalogue!" exclaimed Mrs. Cleveland.

"Well, well, I'll make out a list upon conjecture;" cried Julius.—"I suppose, my lovely little Tachygraphina, that from one of them, you learn the Lapland dialect; from another, the Cherokees; from a third, the Otaïete; and from a fourth, the Hot-

tentot. But, Bab, thy poor head will never be a complete repository of half the tongues spoken in confusion at the dispersion of the builders of Babel, till thou hast added, at least a score more to the list of masters already paid for puzzling thee!"

"I assure you, that they do not puzzle me at all. I have a remarkably quick and retentive memory."

"And yet, I will bet you any sum you please, that there is one language which you have learnt longer than all the rest, but which, ten to one, you spell and understand more incorrectly than half the Misses of Christina's age, at any of the boarding-schools, behind a row of poplars, on the outskirts of the town!"

"If you mean French, you are completely mistaken; for I have known it very thoroughly these ten years."

"No, my dear, not French, but—English!—Aye, you may stare as much as you please; but I shrewdly suspect, that all this prodigious distraction amongst foreign alphabets, grammars, and lexicons, has left you more shamefully ignorant of good plain English, than you will ever have

either the modesty to credit, or the frankness to avow."

Then, turning from his highly-affronted auditress, to direct his conversation to her mother and sister, he was surprised at the evident discomposure of their ill-boding countenances—

"Is the tempest," cried he, alternately surveying them, "brewing or dispersing? Has it already vented its fury, or are these clouds the forerunners of its approach? They look tremendously awful! What *has* been, or *is* to be the matter? Speak at once—

'So foul a sky clears not without a storm:
'Pour down your weather!'

"Don't tease us, Julius," peevishly answered Jemima; "I assure you, we are not at all in a humour to bear it patiently."

"I never found any of you in a humour to bear patiently what you did not like: but remember, that I am something of a spoil'd child too, and am not apt to submit, with a great deal more patience than yourselves, to any prohibitions that fetter my curiosity, and interfere with my good-will

and pleasure. So answer me more to the point, my gentle coz, or I shall put you to the question, ordinary and extraordinary!"

Jemima had every secret inclination to gratify his wishes which he could desire, though she felt ashamed to speak without some urging, and was also a little perplexed how to dress out her intended accusation in terms sufficiently advantageous to herself. She knew that it would give great disgust to Julius to find that any of his family entertained a prepossession in favour of Lord Ennerdale, and she was anxious, whilst casting blame upon Adela on that account, to avoid incurring censure for a similar offence herself. At last, with feigned reluctance, she said—

"I have been threatening all day, ill-naturedly enough, I dare say your sister thinks, to make my appeal to you; but I am sure, if you had not plagued and tormented me in this manner, I never should have said a word. You must know, then, that we have had almost a quarrel about your old enemy, Lord Ennerdale."

"And what," interrupted he, with eyes

flashing fire, "have either of you to do with him?"

"I cannot say, that in this case," answered the guileful girl, "I have much to do with him. Our dispute originated in the very remarkable degree of attention which I saw him paying to your sister yesterday, and again this morning: I was convinced that you would disapprove it, and very plainly told her so. Nay, last night, I communicated to her the whole affair of the duel, which was quite new to her, and which, to do her justice, she seemed extremely shocked at. But, I know not how it was, when they met again this morning, she permitted his assiduities so readily, that, to own the truth, I was quite provoked; and, I dare say, have been a good deal too warm in some of my expressions about it: but can you much wonder at it?"

Whatever Julius might do, Adela wondered at this skilful representation till she was almost deprived of breath. She fixed her bright, expressive eyes upon the disingenuous speaker, who, involuntarily abashed, was forced to avoid their significant mean-

ing by moving back her chair. Mrs. Cleveland herself seemed restless and uneasy; Barbara looked up with a lurking sneer; and a dead silence, for some minutes, prevailed throughout the whole party.

Julius was the first to break it; he started up in a transport of indignation, and seized his hat to hasten away;—but before he went, regarding Jemima with the most indescribable mixture of scorn and resentment, he said—

"I am not the credulous idiot that you had hoped to find! I perfectly understand the sincerity of this professed alarm about Lord Ennerdale, and the exact source of all your generous disturbance on his and Adela's account! Your ambitious designs upon him have been remarked and derided wherever you have met him; and what is more, I can assure your mother, for her comfort, that her views for Talbot upon Ennerdale's wealthy sister, are just as clearly penetrated!—All this I know, and I despise,—for success, I am persuaded, will never attend your projects: nay, if it does, I neither love you, nor honour you sufficiently to care!—As to Adela—she needs

no warning voice from me; I leave her so well hedged in, and guarded by two such watchful and self-interested observers, that, whatever her aspiring inclinations might prompt, I almost defy her to escape your jealous vigilance. She can no where be more safe, and no where, if the reproaches you cast upon her are in any degree merited, more deservedly miserable!—To your amiable and well-meant superintendance I commend her!"

He then abruptly departed, and, as he went, his sister had some difficulty to suppress a smile at the blank and disappointed aspect of Jemima, and the haughty displeasure depicted on the countenance of her mother.

With all her subtilty, Jemima was a bad judge of character; she had yet to learn, that an accusation, in order to gain belief from a penetrating, though impetuous being like Julius, should proceed from unsuspected lips;—she had also yet to learn, that his affection for Adela was too great to suffer any one to behave ill to her but himself. Had he personally witnessed her

friendly deportment to Lord Ennerdale, he would have been outrageous: but hearing it described, with an air of conscious duplicity which she could not entirely shake off, by a girl he at once disliked and distrusted, her mischievous design lost its aim, and

'evil on itself did back recoil!'

The remainder of the evening was spent, by the foiled and angry Jemima, in sullen silence; by Adela, in trying to attend to the pages of a new Review; and by Mrs. Cleveland, in throwing out sharp reflections upon the disrespect of modern young people for their seniors and superiors. At an unusually early hour, they separated for the night,—none of the party very solicitous ever to meet again.

A home so comfortless, and interviews productive of such discord, dejected the elastic spirit of Adela almost as grievously as when suffering from the fickle treatment of her mother at Pine Lodge—almost as much as a real misfortune. It is a trite observation, that, from the accumulation of

petty vexations as much misery results, and perhaps more repining, than from the severest calamities. We summon fortitude to bear these; we know it to be a duty; and we think patience, in such cases, is at once virtuous and dignified: but for slighter annoyances, we call forth slighter courage; tempers of the greatest equanimity become captious by continual provocation; petulance is repelled by petulance; reproach answered with defiance, and suspicion retorted with contempt.

Adela dreaded lest any of these injurious effects should be produced, by the persons around her, upon her own disposition. She scarcely wished to become absolutely callous to their malignity; for she feared, in so doing, to contract an obduracy of feeling, a proud self-sufficiency, that might hereafter render her equally disdainful of the censures of the wise and truly friendly. Yet she had incessantly to contend against the opposite evils of either falling under total subjection, or of giving way to a habit of endless recrimination. To escape these dangers, she knew no method but that of detaching herself from the family more

diligently than ever, and spent the whole of her time, except the portion of it allotted to meals, in the apartment of Mademoiselle Durocher and her youthful pupil. Thither no taunts or asperity ever followed her, and the only happy hours she now experienced in this mansion of contention, were those she passed in their humble retreat.

An answer from Mrs. Somerville to her consultation respecting Lord Ennerdale, at length arrived. It was written in the gayest spirits, and accorded the sanction which Adela had demanded to her keeping up a friendly conduct to him, in terms the most frank and unequivocal:—

"The repugnance of our mad brother," she observed, "to your doing this, will gradually abate; at all events, have the courage to resist his guidance. Lord Ennerdale is much too good to be sacrificed to the ungenerous hatred which Julius cherishes against him. When we meet, which I now flatter myself will be in about ten days or a fortnight, I shall have much to tell you of the origin and progress of our intimacy with him. His first introduction at Rosedown Court took place under cir-

cumstances at once the most ludicrous and affecting;—but the history is too long to be written: I reserve it for one of our sociable fire-side conferences.

"What can I say upon the subject of the love-stricken damsel, your present inmate, but that, alas for her, poor soul! she has allowed herself to be dazzled by a most delusive phantom!—I almost pity her; yet, to blame Lord Ennerdale—trusting, as I do, in the perfect integrity of his nature, which would recoil from the idea of wilfully beguiling any human being—I find impossible. Whatever deception she may suffer under, is self-deception. Some men flirt, as it is called, with such sentimental duplicity of countenance, that it is scarcely possible for the most watchful observer to ascertain whether they are smitten in jest or earnest; others, and Lord Ennerdale is of the number, play off the farce with an air so disengaged, that none but the most inordinately conceited, could, for an instant, mistake their total exemption from serious meaning.

"I wish it would hasten the time of our meeting, to tell you how affectionately I

long to see you! Mr. Somerville and my two little girls participate in the same impatience; you hold as distinguished a place as ever in all their hearts,—and it is agreed, *nem. con.* that after we reach town, you are not to be allowed to remain in your present abode a single hour; from thenceforward, dear Adela, *my home shall be thy home, and nought but death* (or marriage) *shall part thee and me!*

"Adieu, my loved, and
"worthy-to-be-loved sister, yours ever,
"ELINOR SOMERVILLE."

Over the cheering conclusion of this letter, Adela shed the sweetest tears of gratitude and pleasure. She resided amongst such cold-hearted and repulsive beings, and, of late, had been so unaccustomed to kindness, that it touched her more than on any former occasion. She pressed to her lips the precious paper, and mentally exclaimed—"There yet, then, are in the world some gentle individuals who truly and affectionately love me!—An existence such as this, however I may strive to bear it with resignation, is most dreary and dis-

heartening!—But provided with the talisman against dejection with which my Elinor has furnished me, I shall now be enabled to submit, even with cheerfulness, to whatever farther trials may await me."

CHAP. VIII.

NEGLECT.

A FEW days after the arrival of Mrs. Somerville's letter, Adela found an opportunity, at a party which her aunt gave at home, to hold a short undisturbed conference with Talbot Cleveland upon a subject peculiarly interesting to her. She seldom saw him except during dinner, and, since she had been in the house, had never met with him a moment by himself.

He was now, she had been told, upon the point of setting out with a friend, on an excursion, partly of pleasure and partly of business, to the Highlands of Scotland. The season was an unusual one for such a journey; but Talbot had many motives for wishing to try the effect which change of scene might produce upon his mind: he was not happy in his present situation; and,

in that case, even the most rational dispositions become restless and desirous of novelty..

Adela had yet received from her mother not a single line in answer to her letters, and grew hourly more alarmed at so persevering a silence. Distrustful of the machinations of Mrs. Cameron, and often filled with vague apprehensions of the mysterious stranger whom she had obtained a momentary glimpse of previous to her departure from Pine Lodge, she was extremely solicitous to prevail upon Talbot to make some personal enquiries after Lady Rosalvan, in his way either to or from the Highlands. But this was not a subject which she could openly discuss before any third person: she felt some distress, indeed, in mentioning it to Talbot alone; for such were the unfortunate consequences of Lady Rosalvan's errors, that even her own daughter, though sincerely attached to her, was averse from bringing forward her name or remembrance in conversation, and dreaded nothing so much as to hear her spoken of by others.

A little embarrassed how to begin the subject, she at length said to Talbot, "Your

sisters, my dear cousin, were talking, this morning, of your having some design to turn traveller soon. Is it true? And have you really fixed upon Scotland as the place you mean to visit?"

Talbot assured her that she had been correctly informed, and added, that he expected to set out in two or three days.

"So soon?" cried Adela.

"Tell me," resumed he, with some emotion, "what makes you kind enough to interest yourself at all about the matter?

"You do not seem to remember," answered she, "the near relationship I bear to a recluse in Scotland, whose abode lies in the very track you purpose to pursue."

"Most true!" cried Talbot, recollecting himself, "I ought to have applied to you for your commands in that quarter, without requiring this hint. Have you any letter, any message, any packet I can take charge of?"

"You would oblige me beyond measure by being the bearer to her, *in person*, of a letter which I promise to get ready for you in the morning. But this is not all. I wish you to bring me an account of what may

appear to you the actual state of her spirits; I am anxious to know who are her most frequent associates; what her plans are for the summer, and whether she means entirely to persevere in her present system of seclusion. But more especially, my dear cousin, find out for me, if you can, the reasons of her total silence since I left her; and scruple not even to tell her how very unhappy it has made me."

"I will most faithfully endeavour to fulfil all these instructions," cried Talbot, "and am delighted to be employed either in your own service, or in that of any one for whom you feel an interest. But where shall I seek you in the morning, to receive from you the letter of which I am to take custody? I have often wondered what becomes of you regularly from breakfast till dinner? Whither is it that you vanish? And with whom do you associate? Sylphs and fairies?"

"Christina may do very well for a fairy," answered Adela, smiling, "but what think you of poor Mademoiselle Durocher for a sylph?"

"Do you, then, sit in the school-room?"

"I do; and there, if you are kind enough

to come up for it an hour or two before dinner, you will find the letter I am so desirous to entrust to you."

Talbot only looked his acquiescence, seeing his mother approaching; and soon afterwards Adela removed to another part of the room.

The following day, at the hour when he justly concluded the school-room would be freest from masters, Talbot, with an alacrity that had seldom marked his progress to that part of the house, ascended to the well remembered scene of his infantine studies—his first initiation into the rudiments of learning. Adela had apprised Mademoiselle Durocher of the visitor she expected, and waited his arrival with the letter she had prepared for him in her hand. The first sound of his footsteps in the passage, drew her to the door, and, on perceiving him, she gaily called out—

" I am glad to find you so honourable an observer of your word! Here is the letter you were to receive, and with it take my sincerest thanks for your punctuality to our little appointment."

Talbot held forth his hand for her dis-

patch, but still looked unwilling to depart, and appeared disappointed at not being invited to enter.

"You reward your messengers so shabbily," cried he, half laughing, "and keep them at such an immeasurable distance, that I almost feel tempted to decline ever acting in that capacity again! Why cannot you ask me to go in with you a moment?"

"How could I suspect that you would even wish it? But, if such is the case, pray proceed; we shall all be very proud of the honour of your company."

"My dear brother," cried Christina, running eagerly to meet him, "who would ever have thought of your desiring to enter this region of nouns, adjectives, pronouns, and verbs? Perhaps you are come to assist Mademoiselle Durocher in correcting my French exercise? Here it is. Or would you prefer hearing me repeat my last lesson in English chronology? I assure you it is mighty amusing, and all in verse: it begins—

'When Julius Cæsar first to Britain came,
'He scarcely introduced the Roman name—'

Then there's about the invasions of the Saxons, and the Danes, and the Normans,

and then, from all these, they make us out such a mongrel race, that I have lost all respect for my ancestors, and look upon them as mere freebooters, and adventurers."

"It must be acknowledged," said Talbot, "that the study of English history, tends to make you very patriotic! But spare yourself the trouble of entertaining me with any more of your poetical chronology, and tell me in what part of the room Miss Cleveland usually establishes herself, and how she contrives to pursue her own occupations without being continually disturbed by your interruptions."

"Oh, I never interrupt her—at least, voluntarily. Mademoiselle Durocher will assure you, that I behave quite like an angel, and am all mildness, application, and docility! It is really a pity that you cannot witness the marvellous concord which reigns amongst us. Do come up to-morrow morning, and assist at some of the lessons! It will do your heart good to see what a little pattern of meekness I am become."

"Above all," cried her brother, "I admire the perfect modesty with which you abstain from self-commendation!

"Why, if I puff my own merits a little, I'll tell you to what it is owing. Whilst I was very unruly and very perverse, and plagued all my governesses out of their lives, the whole house knew it, and talked of nothing else. You yourself, Talbot, used to throw out hints and insinuations, that proved you were but too well acquainted with many of my misdemeanours; and Papa laughingly called me his little Tartar. But now that I am grown quiet and obedient, nobody takes the least notice of it; my goodness is overlooked, or considered as a thing of course, though my naughtiness called forth hourly taunts and reproaches. Is this quite fair?"

"Yes; and perfectly natural. Whilst Carlo, my father's spaniel, snapt and snarled at you every time you went near him, how indignant you were at what you termed his excessive ill-nature!—Now, that he suffers you to play with him as roughly as you please, and manifests towards you the utmost attachment, you give him no credit for the happy change, and scarcely ever notice it."

"This is sorry consolation, my dear brother. Poor Carlo, without any effort of his own, is grown good he does not know why,

and merely because habit has familiarized him to my presence. But it cost *me* a great deal of trouble to effect any thing like a reformation; and therefore I still think, that I deserved higher praise."

"Were not the lamb-like qualities of which you make so great a boast, assumed, in a great measure, to please our cousin? Her affection has been your reward, and it ought to be sufficient to satisfy your utmost ambition."

"And so it shall, dear brother! and so it really *was*, to speak the truth, till I took this grumbling fit in my head, I hardly know why!"

The unexpected, and, in that part of the house, unusual appearance of Jemima, occasioned, at this moment, great surprise to the whole party. Talbot was particularly chagrined by it. He had hitherto, with such systematic caution, abstained from seeking the society of Adela, that now, to be discovered with her in an apartment which it would be believed he could only have entered on her account, gave him considerable vexation. Adela was less obviously disconcerted; yet she heartily wished that

the circumstance had not happened, and expected nothing pleasant to ensue from it.

The first person Jemima addressed, was the passive, quiet governess, who sat calmly reading near the fire.

"Why, Mademoiselle," cried she, in French, "you keep school, I find, for persons of all ages and sexes! I am sure Mamma is very much obliged to you for extending your cares so widely round the family!"

"My dear Jemima," cried her brother, attempting to assume an air of gay unconcern, "this sneering speech would be infinitely more characteristic, had you twenty additional years of 'single blessedness' tacked to your age, than it sounds now, proceeding from such young lips. The venerable Mrs. Editha Byron, your great aversion and terror, could scarcely have made a worse!"

"You are a little sore, my dear brother, which accounts for your being of that opinion. But I beg I may not break up your conference, whatever it might be about. I dare say, there would be some points in it not above my capacity, and from which I might derive great profit."

"Indeed you might!" cried Christina—"But I very much question whether you are just now quite in the right sort of disposition for profiting by what we wer esaying. You seem to be in one of your most consequential moods, and half incli ned to take us to task all round. Has Mamma sent you here with a commission to huff us? Why did she not send Barbara also? She would have scolded much the most methodically of the two. You have a very pretty talent for saying disagreeable things, but you never know, till you have looked about for a fault, on what hook to hang them. Now Barbara, when she is out of humour, does not throw out her ill-natured remarks at random; she flies back immediately to some good old grievance, and rings the changes upon it, ding dong, in the most regular order imaginable, till she is tired."

"I would wish you, my little flippant sister," said Jemima, tartly, "to bear in mind, that Mamma has never granted you an unlimited license to exercise your skill at repartee upon me! It is quite sufficient if *one* elder sister in a family is allowed to be made the butt of the younger's impertinent attempts at wit!"

Christina, biting her lips, and colouring with anger, yet reluctant, in the presence of Adela, to give way to her resentment, prevailed upon herself only to answer this speech by a low and ceremonious curt'sy; after which, flying to an open piano-forte, she begun playing, as loud as she possibly could, *The Devil among the Taylors!*

Jemima, convinced of the impracticability of making herself heard through so rapid and noisy a clatter, deemed it expedient to resolve on a retreat; and Talbot, heartily regretting the awkward predicament into which he had drawn himself, stole off at the same moment.

"Now should I most excessively like to know," said the laughing Christina, discontinuing, when they were gone, her vehement performance, "what suspected mischief, that young spy, my fair sister, came hither to detect! I never beheld a face of more piercing curiosity than she brought with her into this poor dear plodding room. What could she hope to discover, unless, indeed, she watched my brother when he came up, and expected to find him at your feet, pouring forth passionate protestations

of everlasting adoration, and calling upon heaven and earth, and Mademoiselle Durocher and me, to bear witness to his vows?"

Adela was as well convinced as her little friend, that the visit was no effect of chance, but she was unwilling to acknowledge the vague distrust to which it had given rise, and not very much disposed to make any observations upon what had passed. To Mademoiselle Durocher, who so imperfectly understood English, the whole scene had been nearly unintelligible; and Christina, receiving so little encouragement to dwell upon it, in a short time directed her attention to other subjects.

By the super-added expression of rigour observable during dinner, in the countenance of Mrs. Cleveland, Adela speedily became assured that she owed nothing less to the good offices of Jemima than she had foreboded. There were guests present, however, and consequently no allusions were made to the offending interview: but in every glance of her aunt's eye, directed either towards herself or Talbot, she read decided condemnation; and even in the indulgent aspect of the General, she could

trace an air of scrutiny whenever he looked at her, that amply proclaimed the species of information to which he had been listening.

Had not her concern at being thought capable of giving clandestine encouragement to any attentions from Talbot, repressed all disposition to laughter, Adela could have been amused at the facility with which the whole family seemed ready to take the alarm, whomever she was found guilty of speaking to with sociability and regard. She wondered how it was possible that the same individuals who had recently evinced such jealousy of her accidental intercourse with Lord Ennerdale, could now manifest so much apprehension of her designs upon Talbot: "Surely they must imagine me," she internally cried, "the most indiscriminate and general coquette that ever existed. I cannot comprehend how they can thus think it worth their while either to harass themselves, or to watch and suspect me!"

The chief reason of all this was the unguarded but innocent speech which she had addressed to her cousin at the door of the

school-room, and, unfortunately, addressed to him in a voice sufficiently audible to be overheard by Jemima, as she was coming out of an adjoining apartment. The word *appointment*, and, above all, the letter she spoke of having prepared for him, were sounds of equivocal import, to which their candid auditress failed not to give the most sinister interpretation. The instant that she had terminated her unwelcome visit to the supposed scene of assignation, she hastened, at whatever risk of disobliging her brother, to communicate to both her parents the full extent of her own suspicions, and more than the full extent of all that she had heard. The communication rendered Mrs. Cleveland nearly outrageous, and had no very happy effect upon the temper of even her negligent and easy husband. He was proud of Adela's beauty, and sufficiently attached to her to be perfectly willing to assist her elevation by a marriage with any body's only son but his own! As she had no fortune, however, and no certainty of ever possessing any, she was, with all her acknowledged merits, personal and men-

tal, one of the last individuals he would have chosen for a daughter-in-law.

"You must connect yourself," had long been his accustomed exhortation to Talbot, "with a woman who has money, or you must resign yourself, during my life, to the comfortable prospect of subsisting upon roots and water! I have not a guinea to bestow upon romantic love, and self-devoted folly."

This was language which, though he thought it his duty to hear with patience, not even habit could enable Talbot to hear without pain: but his feelings and principles, in his own family, were as little scrutinized and understood, as they were calculated to be approved: he made no display of their disinterestedness;- he abstained from every species of useless discussion, and without vainly seeking to convince others, was happy to escape giving offence by being driven to acknowledge, that he remained wholly unconvinced himself.

When questioned relative to the letter which his sister had accused Adela of having deliberately waited at a pre-concerted

interview to deliver to him, he refused entering into any explanation concerning it, regarding himself, as, in some measure, bound in honour not to betray a sort of trust confided to his discretion. Yet, had his father alone been present, he might not have scrupled to be less reserved: but since Adela had shewn herself peculiarly reluctant to speak of the commission which he had undertaken, before the ladies of his family, he felt persuaded that he had no right to be more communicative than the person who employed him.

It might have been imagined, that Jemima, had she really entertained the suspicions which she was so prompt to publish, of the encouragement given by Adela to her brother, would have been happy in the relief this must afford to her jealous apprehensions respecting Lord Ennerdale. But the fact is, she cared very little whether her present surmises were founded on truth or error; neither did she thoroughly credit one word of her own deposition: her chief aim was, to render Adela as obnoxious to her father and mother as she was now become to herself; and no method, she was

well convinced, would more securely effect that object than an accusation in which the interests of Talbot were concerned.

A sounder politician would have known, that it was safer to leave an enemy in peaceful possession of a trifling advantage, than to arm too many confederates against him, who, forgetful of the object of their employer, would each act upon personal motives, and forward or injure the original cause, as might be most conducive to their own interest.

Whilst Mrs. Cleveland saw no danger from Adela's attractions at home, she was willing to assist Jemima in preventing their success abroad: but the moment any apprehensions occurred to her for her son, she ceased to entertain the slightest anxiety on account of Lord Ennerdale, deeming his being lost to Jemima a matter of perfect indifference, compared to Talbot's being gained by her unportioned cousin.

The result, therefore, of the luckless informer's interference, was this: an assembly, given by Mrs. Elmer, to which they were all invited, but which Mrs. Cleveland, rather than admit Adela of the party, had

meant wholly to decline, she now, on the contrary, determined to attend, for the express, though unavowed, purpose, of throwing her again in Lord Ennerdale's way.

The surprise, the vehement remonstrances, the unspeakable vexation of Jemima on hearing this resolution, were all equally disregarded. Her mother was inflexible; the General sided with her. Adela knew nothing of the discussion; and at the appointed time, which happened to be the very evening preceding Talbot's intended journey, they all drove to the house of Mrs. Elmer.

The crowd of company, though neither so youthful nor so gay as at the ball, was, however, equally fashionable, and almost equally brilliant. Adela was becoming inured to such scenes, and with her present companions, they possessed scarcely any other power than that of fatiguing and annoying her. She felt insulated, even in the largest parties, when forced to recollect of how little importance she was to every individual by whom they were composed, particularly to those with whom it was her ill fate to enter them. She received no ca-

couragement to hold by Mrs. Cleveland's arm, or that of either of her daughters! her accommodation was disregarded; her casual remarks frequently remained unanswered, and she felt conscious of being regarded as an inevitable incumbrance, to whom, had any difficulty or distress occurred, no sympathy would have been extended, and, except what decency enjoined, no assistance afforded. Often, under such depressing circumstances, tears rushed into her eyes, even in the most splendid circles. Silent, abstracted, unamused, she slowly paraded through the magnificent apartments, accompanying, as if upon sufferance, the unfeeling mother and daughters, who seemed to vie with each other in tacitly denying her all support and countenance.

Amongst the minor ills of life, few are so wounding and oppressive to the young and keenly susceptible, as wilful neglect, publicly manifested. In private, it is practicable to run away from its infliction, and the silence and solitude of home may be beguiled by some interesting occupation: but in the midst of society, to experience loneliness; in the thickest concourse, to

feel like an outcast; and amongst a multitude of eager speakers, to be the only being to whom no one addresses a word;—these are trials which, at the age of Adela, nay, at any age, would be hard to bear.

The observation to which her face and figure exposed her from the men,—the one, attractive from its bloom and loveliness; the other, too nobly elegant to be overlooked,—conduced but little to improve the predicament in which she was placed. She saw in their gaze a freedom and boldness which she was well persuaded they would not have presumed to display had they beheld her more properly protected: and one of her great sources of vexation was, the perpetual restraint she was obliged to impose upon herself; and the proud, repulsive air which she thought it necessary to assume in order to check the familiarity of their notice.

Mrs. Elmer, on the entrance of the Cleveland party, having addressed something civil to them all, and bestowed, on Adela in particular, a reception full of graciousness, made her way with as much dispatch

as the throng would permit, into an adjoining apartment in search of Lord Ennerdale.

Having found him—

"Hasten," cried she, "into the next room, and exert yourself to restore, to a little of her wonted vivacity, your handsome rural friend. Yonder she is, poor thing! with her stately aunt, and pert cousins, looking so weary of her life, so moped and joyless, it almost freezes one to see her. She had not that air of languid apathy when the good and friendly Mrs. Ross was her companion; I dare say, those odious relations have been lecturing and tormenting her in the coach all the way from their house to this!—But go to her, Lord Ennerdale; talk her into cheerfulness; and—if you can—ask her, in their hearing, why she has not returned my visit? I am dying to know, whether the card I left for her at their door has ever been mentioned to her. What would the envious people have? I left others for *them* also."

Lord Ennerdale had some difficulty in persuading himself to stay and listen to so long a speech: it was scarcely concluded,

ere he darted off, and in a very few instants, was at Adela's side.

"Before I allow myself," cried he, "to express half the pleasure I feel in seeing you, tell me—do I see you well? and, if well, why do I see you so completely out of spirits?"

"I am perfectly well," answered Adela, brightening a little at the sound of his voice, "and far less entitled to compassion for being out of spirits, than to a good scolding, I am afraid, for being—out of humour!—Will you undertake to administer it?"

"With all the pleasure in the world! A scolding which should produce the effect of putting you into a decided passion, would be the most infallible mode of cure that could be devised. Ill-humour, concentrated, is apt to be somewhat durable; but put it into a ferment, and it evaporates almost immediately. Thus would it be, could I animate you to an extraordinary pitch of anger; it would hasten the recovery of your natural serenity surprizingly, and we should afterwards see nothing but smiles and sun-shine upon your countenance."

"You may think so," cried Adela; "but in very truth, I am in too vapid and indolent a disposition to be 'touched with noble anger' at any thing."

"Why what has transformed you into so impassive a Stoic? is it weariness of this crowd, and contempt of those who compose it? or did you bring a splenetic temper with you, and are you determined to carry it away, for the benefit of your maid whilst she undresses you?"

"This," cried Adela, "is really scolding me in earnest!—I think it a little hard, that you should construe a confession of accidental moodiness, into a resolution of deliberate frowardness."

"Oh, now that you think it worth your while to defend yourself, I begin to have some hopes of you!—A very little more accusation would provoke you to retort, and from retorting, you might proceed to downright invective, and then the cure of that vapidity you spoke of, would be complete. But, though you gave me a commission to play the censor, and we all, when 'dressed in a little brief authority,' love to exercise our powers, yet had I rather try gentler

means.—Let me then endeavour to amuse, instead of scolding away, your gravity. In the next room, Mrs. Elmer has been exhibiting a very beautiful illuminated missal, and several curious old portraits in enamel. Come and look at them; they may be specific as exterminators of *ennui*."

He was then leading her away, but Jemima, who had with difficulty been so long withheld by her mother from interrupting them, now advanced, and, in an audible whisper, said to Adela—

"Would you be so unkind as to leave the room just as Talbot is entering it?"

"Why should I be expected to stay on his account?"

"How sweetly unconscious! But remember—he goes to-morrow, and all your little snug *tête-à-tête* interviews must be suspended for some weeks!"

There was a degree of malice in this speech, designedly uttered to reach the ear of Lord Ennerdale, which, in one so young, appeared to Adela (notwithstanding the experience she had had of Jemima's guileful character) quite portentous!—She stopped, and involuntarily looked round to observe its

effect upon her conductor. An air of surprise, mingled, however, with doubt, was visible in his aspect; and, as her eyes met his, she fancied there was an expression in them that seemed to ask—"Can this be true? Do you admit Talbot to hold private interviews with you?" But not a syllable was spoken on either side; he seemed determined to remain silent as long as she continued so herself; and she was too sick at heart, either to force conversation, or to remember for what purpose she had put herself under his guidance. They both therefore stood still; and both felt sufficiently uncomfortable.

At this awkward juncture, Mrs. Elmer stepped up to them—

"What perplexity there is in your faces!" cried she;—"whither are you going? or, rather, whither *were* you going? for you now seem to be completely root-bound!"

"You find us," said Lord Ennerdale, "thus far on our way, wafted by prosperous gales, to visit and admire your enamels: but, all at once, the breeze slackened, our course was arrested, our sails flagged, and

here we are, helplessly afloat, waiting for a fresh tide and more favourable wind."

"A dextrous steersman is probably more wanted," said Mrs. Elmer, "than a brisker gale. Come, Miss Cleveland, let me be your pilot, and I will guide you safely, in defiance of rocks and quicksands, to the destined port."

So saying, she drew Adela's arm within her own, and they both moved forward. Lord Ennerdale, at a little distance, followed them.

On approaching the open cabinet in which the enamels were deposited—"Here we are," cried Mrs. Elmer, "at the end of our little voyage. Now, Miss Cleveland, you shall have a chair close to these treasures, and a table and candles, and some humble attendant to snuff them. Lord Ennerdale, I depute you to that office, and pray execute it better than the last to which I appointed you. I sent you, some time ago, to act as a cordial on a fair lady's spirits: but can you, in conscience, aver that you ably performed your commission?"—

"I merit no reproaches," answered he: "for, though unsuccessful, I was sincere in

my endeavours to obey you, and though once baffled, I am willing to try my fortune again."

"Then I absolve you for all past failures, and now commit you to your better fate."

She retreated after saying this; and Adela in a few moments, looking up, cried—"How good Mrs. Elmer is to bestow upon me so much attention!"

"I know not that for this she is entitled to much praise, since I am very certain that she is acting more from choice than ceremony: but are you not, for some reason or other, a little too deficient in ceremony to her?—You look surprized! Is it possible, then, that you are uninformed of her visit to you—a visit which, ere now, she had hoped you would have returned?"

"I never heard of it till this minute!"

"The information I have given you then, which, I assure you, is most correct, will, I trust, have the effect of inducing you to repair the omission as soon as possible."

"I will be perfectly sincere with you, Lord Ennerdale," replied Adela.—"At present I am not in a predicament to pay or to

receive visits at my own option: I go no where but as the General and Mrs. Cleveland direct; and the few who may do me the honour of wishing me to cultivate their acquaintance, must have the indulgence to bear patiently with my apparent remissness till the arrival in town of my sister Somerville."

"I will communicate this answer—at least its general purport—to Mrs. Elmer, and think I may venture to affirm that she will accept it as a sufficient apology. You will not find her a *very* punctilious and exacting character; but she is warmly disposed to admire you, and a decided repulse would give her a degree of mortification which, I am persuaded, you would be sorry to inflict upon her.

"Indeed I should—and ashamed as well as sorry. I entreat you, therefore, to make as fair a representation of my case as you can, and to preserve me from appearing negligent and ungrateful for the partiality with which she is so good as to think of me."

Whilst this little dialogue was passing, Talbot Cleveland had found his way into the apartment where they were sitting, and

now, as he stood near the door, caught Lord Ennerdale's eye. He bowed to him, and Talbot returned the salutation, but without approaching, though he looked irresolute, and still lingered in the room.

Adela almost wished, with the same openness that had dictated her answer respecting Mrs. Elmer, to have explained to her early friend the motive that had led to her holding the secret conference with Talbot alluded to by Jemima. But the idea of touching upon her mother's history — of owning that she had felt ashamed of publicly speaking of that mother, even in the family of her uncle, was too humiliating to be borne.—Neither did she think it would at all become her to enter, unsolicited, upon an explanation which would manifest such anxiety to convince Lord Ennerdale that her affections were disengaged. Whatever he might conclude, therefore, she determined to let the subject rest; prudently adopting the maxim she had somewhere read, which exhorts all those who are thoroughly in doubt *what* to do, patiently to resolve upon doing *nothing*.

But the restless and self-tormented Je-

mima could not submit to be equally passive; she now, accompanied by Barbara (ambitious to display her critical sagacity in remarks upon the enamels) made her way towards the cabinet, and, at a loss what else to propose that would detach him from Adela, asked Lord Ennerdale to play with her at chess. He started at this invitation, but assured her that he had no talents for playing at chess in a room crowded with company, and must decline accepting her challenge, unless Mrs. Elmer would consent to turn all her friends out of the house:

" And you," continued he, addressing Adela, " amongst the number; for as I was deputed to do the honours of this cabinet to you, I cannot possibly resign my station whilst you remain."

Jemima, though much dissatisfied with this answer, knew not how to press her request further; but begging Adela to give her half her chair, she affected to interest herself extremely about the portraits, and poured upon Lord Ennerdale such a succession of questions concerning them, that she effectually prevented his speaking to any body but herself. This lasted till her mo-

ther's carriage was called; she then threw out all her lures to induce the Earl to escort them down stairs: but, as Talbot was at hand to assist them, he held back from making any offer of his services; and Adela, taking of him a friendly leave, followed her departing companions.

CHAP. IX.

OSTENTATION.

From this period till the arrival in town of Mr. and Mrs. Somerville, Adela exerted herself with some success to avoid the disagreeable round of engagements in which, without consulting her wishes, she had hitherto been involved. The departure of Talbot, on the morning after Mrs. Elmer's assembly, secured her from the apprehension of being thought to remain at home with any view of seeing more of him; and the heartless negligence with which she was always treated by her aunt and cousins when in company, gave her a disgust to appearing any where with them, which neither the remonstrances of the General nor the

urgent exhortations of her brother could subdue.

They both wished her to be more seen than perhaps was consistent with good policy, and both attributed to her own perverse rejection of the opportunities afforded her to exhibit herself, the failure of their sanguine hopes respecting her speedy establishment. She was sorry to differ on any subject with the only well-wishers she now ever saw: but as her own hopes and views had by no means taken the same direction as theirs; as she had aimed merely, in going out, to be amused, and deeply disdained the idea of resorting any where to attract an offer of marriage, she remained firm to her purpose; and henceforward, heard of balls, operas, and assemblies, with as much indifference as she would have heard of a vestry-meeting. She rejoiced that none of the females of the family had the hypocrisy to affect concern at her new plan. On the contrary, it seemed to reconcile them to her being beneath their roof, and they all testified more civility towards her than they had yet ever shewn.

Thus passed another week, the quietest and the freest from contention of any that she had spent in Berkeley Square. Sir Patrick Harley, the most frequent visitor she beheld, and his silent attentions, though noticed and derided by Jemima, gave Adela so little molestation, that, unless she had been called upon to remark them, he might have sat watching her a whole day, without being himself remembered a single moment.

Julius, with all his anxiety to see his sister well established, was far from wishing to forward the pretensions of such an admirer as the wealthy but unattractive baronet, and only laughed at his dumb devotion as often as he was witness to it. But the General was less disposed to view the affair with ridicule:—"If Sir Patrick," said he to his nephew, "had held out to me a prospect of remaining unmarried to the end of the chapter, I will honestly own, that I should be far from wishing him to change his purpose for the advantage of your sister. My children are almost his nearest relations, and his dying a bachelor, might put them in possession, either of the whole, or an

ample portion of his immense property. But, let him linger and hesitate as he will, I am well persuaded, that some day or other, he will do the foolish thing, and bestow his hand and title, and probably, the bulk of his fortune, on a pennyless beauty. The longer he procrastinates, the worse will be his choice. If, whilst a girl of family might still be induced to accept him, he trifles away the opportunity, be assured, that in his decrepitude and confirmed imbecility, he will marry his own, or his neighbour's dairy-maid! In preference to this, he has my heartiest good wishes for the success of his suspected views on Adela."—

"Which views," cried Julius, "Adela will never be such an enemy to his dairy-maid as to encourage!—No, my good uncle, we must find a better lover for her than this drowsy baronet, or resign her to the respectable prospect of cutting a figure in some future edition of Hayley's Essay on Old Maids."

Two days after this conversation, whilst Adela was walking before dinner with Christina and Mademoiselle Durocher in the Park,

she was unexpectedly accosted by Lord Ennerdale.—He was on horseback, and had galloped eagerly to overtake her.—

"Am I so happy," cried he, "as to be the first bearer to you of a piece of excellent news? Have you heard any thing this morning to give you particular satisfaction?"

"Nothing," replied Adela, "and, to own the truth, I can hardly expect, that your intelligence will be quite equal to the good which your countenance promises."

"My countenance," resumed he, "is a very honest index; it bids you prepare for what will give you the most pleasure, and communicates to myself the highest gratification.—I just now passed through Cumberland Place, and saw Mr. and Mrs. Somerville alight from their travelling carriage."

"Oh, *this* I allow to be fully adequate to all that your looks prognosticated!" cried the enchanted Adela—"Thank you, my Lord, for being so delightful a messenger!"

Then, addressing Mademoiselle Durocher, she besought her to turn back, and walk with her to her sister's immediately. The request was granted, and Lord Ennerdale,

smilingly bowing, wished her good morning, and rode away.

Christina, in a tone of lamentation now said—

"That Lord Ennerdale is a very charming creature, but I could almost find in my heart to hate him, for the pleasure he shewed in bringing you this news! How *shall* I bear to part with you, my dearest cousin?"

"We shall often meet, I trust," replied Adela, "though we shall no longer be inmates of the same house. You have every reason, dear Christina, to expect in my admirable sister, a friend the most sincere and cordial."

"Oh, I know Mrs. Somerville extremely well, and love her with all my heart. But do think how deplorably I shall miss you every hour at home! And how forlorn and wretched I shall feel when I look round for you in vain in our gloomy old school-room!"

Adela said every thing which she thought most likely to cheer and comfort her: and in a short time, they reached Mr. Somerville's door.

The meeting between the two sisters was at once tender and joyful, and the delight

expressed by the friendly Mr. Somerville, as well as the genuine rapture of the children, made of this interview a scene the most gratifying to every feeling heart. Christina, who was present at it, could scarcely refrain from tears; but they were tears of pleasure, and whilst they glistened in her eyes, she had the generosity to say—

"You now look so truly happy, Cousin Adela, that it would be wicked to wish you any where else!—I will go home, therefore, and try to reconcile myself to what *I* have lost, by thinking of what *you* have gained."

But Adela could not suffer her to return to Berkeley-Square without accompanying her, and taking a personal leave of her uncle, Mrs. Cleveland, and the young ladies. The former was, on every account, entitled to such an attention; and the latter she by no means wished to emulate in rudeness.

It was agreed, however, that unless very much pressed by the General to dine at his house, she should return immediately to her sister's, whose established guest she was from that moment to consider herself.

The feelings with which the several indi-

viduals of the Cleveland family heard of the arrival of Mrs. Somerville, were as different as the interests which they each had at heart.

Jemima feared it would give an almost irrecoverable blow to her remotest prospect of achieving the conquest of Lord Ennerdale. She was now aware of his intimacy with the Somervilles, and felt a pang not easy to describe, at the certainty that Adela's removal to their house, would more than ever facilitate his means of intercourse with her. This conviction, inflaming all the previous aversion which she had conceived against her cousin, caused her to listen to a communication—otherwise so welcome to her—with the gloomiest and most bitter discontent.

Mrs. Cleveland, on the contrary, had scarcely ever smiled so sweetly upon her niece, as whilst receiving her farewell compliments. To get rid so cheaply of a companion for her daughters so insufferably formed to eclipse them, was not an event to be lightly disregarded. In proportion as her fastidious delicacy of taste was pained every time she looked at the plain features

of Barbara or Christina, her pride was humbled when she contemplated in Adela a superiority so manifest over her favourite Jemima. In addition to this, she was rejoiced to remove from beneath Talbot's paternal roof an object which she feared might become so dangerous to him; and she also hoped, that the departure of so dreaded a competitor would tend to soften the now almost habitual ill-humour to which the long-indulged, but neither thankful nor happy Jemima permitted herself to give way.

Barbara was the least affected at the separation, either with concern or pleasure, of any of the party. She had formed no schemes in which Adela could interfere, and therefore entertained against her no ill-will; but she had no heart which the most attaching qualities could touch, and therefore could experience from no deprivation any regret. Self, absolute and unmixed, reigned in her frigid bosom. She cared not who censured, who differed, or who concurred in her tastes and pursuits; to gratify her own mania for useless knowledge, and now and then to excite wonder or envy by

its display, was all she had in view, and all she demanded to ensure the narrow portion of felicity it seemed her wish to attain:

'If human things went ill or well,
If changing empires rose or fell,
The morning pass'd, the evening came,
And found this 'damsel' still the same.
She wish'd not, car'd not, laugh'd nor cried;
And so she liv'd, and so she died.' PRIOR.

The General was out, and not expected home till night. Adela therefore wrote to him, and left in his study a short but grateful farewell; paid a parting visit to the nursery of the infant Laura, and then hastened to apprise the delighted Amy of this new removal.

Mrs. Cleveland, when she came down again, graciously offered her the carriage to convey her to Cumberland Place, and Adela seeing it at the door, gladly accepted it, and in a few moments departed.

No visits, on this first and most satisfactory day, were, of course, either received or paid by Mrs. Somerville. The hours were devoted to family affection and true domestic comfort. All parties had much to hear, and much to communicate, yet were

they all too little collected to enter with detail on any interesting subject. Adela was never weary of gazing at the beloved faces around her; of caressing the children, or of meditating upon the happy change in her own circumstances. She admired, as if she had beheld it for the first time, the beauty and sweetness of her sister's countenance; and she viewed with delight the perfect air of contentment in the frank aspect of Mr. Somerville. Whilst thus employed, she hardly wished to utter a syllable; it was such a pleasure to her to hear *their* voices, that she seemed willing to resign every faculty but that of listening to, and dwelling upon their accents.

The succeeding morning, however, though it brought with it no diminution of satisfaction, rose upon them all with more sobriety of happiness, and during breakfast they were able to engage in a connected conversation.

Mrs. Somerville asked many questions relating to Julius; and expressed some apprehension of the effect their intimacy with Lord Ennerdale would produce upon his irascible temper.

"My too scrupulous Elinor," cried Mr. Somerville, "hear me, once for all, on this perplexing subject. I have the most cordial regard for your brother, and the sincerest desire to live with him upon friendly terms. He is hot and passionate as a salamander; but he has seldom directed his rash furies against me, and I know that, take him for all in all, he is a kind-hearted and good fellow. But neither my wish to conciliate him as a relation, nor to please him as a frequent guest, shall induce me to renounce, or even to check, the intercourse of a man I so every way approve as Lord Ennerdale. To this latter, my doors shall always be open, and my hand always readily extended. If your brother can tolerate the idea of associating with him, well and good; I desire no better; let them meet, and let their past differences be buried in oblivion. If he cannot;—if he chuses to put me to the disagreeable necessity of deciding *which* of the two I must give up, grieve not, my dear Elinor, if I am positive in resolving, it shall not be Lord Ennerdale. *He* exacts no sacrifices, and therefore ought not to be made one."

"If you had not spoken quite so sternly, my good brother," said Adela, "I should say you had spoken like an oracle! But whence this wondrous attachment to Lord Ennerdale, whom, when I last quitted Rosedown Court, you did not even know by sight?"

"No unfair play, Adela," exclaimed Mrs. Somerville, "the elucidation of that mystery is my province: and as I have not the smallest chance of distinguishing myself, like my lord and master, in the didactic style of oratory, pray leave me the descriptive."

"You are two saucy critics," cried Mr. Somerville, "and are seeking to persuade me that the wisest determination I ever made in my life, has been expressed in the despotic language of a bashaw! But your comments trouble me not. I feel and know that I am right. I act from no motives of self-interest, and am guided by no sentiments of unjust partiality. The pleasure I promise myself from the society of Lord Ennerdale, would be increased by the friendly participation of Julius;—it shall not, however, be destroyed by his unreasonable enmity. But now, Elinor, tell your story. I grow some-

what more earnest than I wish, and shall be glad to divert my thoughts."

"Well then, my dear Adela," said Mrs. Somerville, "you must endeavour to recall to your remembrance, that once upon a time, there lived in a solemn old castle, close to our more modern and humble habitation, a redoubted Peer, famous for loving to be at variance with all his neighbours, and inveterately ill-disposed, in particular, against our whole race. This amiable personage, you doubtless recollect, was entitled Ossely. He had a lady and two daughters; a nephew, who was his heir, and eke his son-in-law; and a niece who was his ward. These illustrious folks we never encountered, except upon the king's highway or at church—the last place where I was anxious to see people whose pride always put my own self-consequence into a ferment! As for the youthful heir, he so seldom visited the castle after his marriage, that of him we beheld nothing; and gradually, almost forgot that such a future neighbour was in reserve for us. But one day, the noble old Viscount died! And not a soul, I verily believe, has, to this hour, remembered to bestow upon his memory the

tribute of a tear. I am very certain, at least, that the poor in our vicinity, have hitherto remitted that ceremony. How the rich might acquit themselves—being, by custom, better versed in étiquette, it is not for me to determine. I can only say, with the veracity of a conscientious historian, that whatever tears were due to him from *us*, remain yet to be shed. But peace to his manes! I should not have spoken of him with such levity, had I remembered a single good quality for which he was worth lamenting.

"He had the comfort, however, just in time to grace his epitaph with the title, of succeeding, a few weeks previous to his demise, to the honours of an Earldom: and the poor simple man thought it worth his while, even from a sick bed, to order the emblazoning of his new heraldic dignities on every coach, chariot, chaise, waggon, cart, and wheelbarrow in his possession. It was from seeing these ensigns armorial freshly painted over the door of a little inn he had established on the outskirts of his demesne, that we first learnt his recently-acquired distinctions. Two days afterwards, we heard of his death! Was not this carry-

ing the ruling passion to the grave? And, in the course of three or four weeks, we had the edification of beholding, just opposite our pew, in the parish church, a pompous escutcheon, and near it, a marble monumental slab, setting forth, in large letters, the birth, death, age, and titles of Adolphus Mordington, Viscount Ossely,' and Earl of Ennerdale!—Do you not think his honours came to him at a happy moment?"—

"I think, my dearest Elinor, that you are, on this subject, inhumanly sarcastic."

"Perhaps I am: but I have no wish to dissemble the decided antipathy with which I regard every man of great riches, yet great uselessness. A splendid funeral, performed in the country, from which the rustics turn away with expressive indifference, always gives me, if the deceased has resided amongst them, a bad opinion of his past life, and fills me with indignation against his character. Popularity may be so cheaply purchased in a village, that to forfeit it entirely, the owner of a large mansion must have been a niggard of the very fragments which were carried from his table: for these alone, given with cheerfulness at his gate, would secure

him *some* portion of regard. But the late Lord Ennerdale, though the steeple bells tolled for him, I believe, a whole day;—though more feathers, scarfs, and hatbands appeared at his obsequies than the peasants had ever seen before, attracted none but children to follow his hearse, and was calmly suffered to proceed to his grave with this negative remark: 'They be ringing, I believe, for the great shy Lord that lived in yond fine castle. I did never hear of much good he did. Mayhap his heir may be a different sort of man, like!"

"We will hope he may!" cried Adela.—"I trust, indeed, he runs no risk of ever provoking so sorry an elegy!—But to depart from all digression, and come, at length, to the commencement of our acquaintance with him. The fine castle had been shut up for three months, and we knew not, nor, in truth were very solicitous to learn, how much longer it might frown in empty grandeur. One clear bright morning, however, whilst you were at Pine-Lodge, the nurse of my two little girls came to me with the face of an anxious petitioner. Her mother, a very aged woman, residing in a village at

some miles distance, she told me, was alarmingly ill. A neighbour had been to Rosedown to communicate to her the intelligence, and poor Margaret earnestly besought me to let her go and visit this sick parent immediately:—You will easily believe, that so reasonable a request met with no refusal. But Margaret had not yet obtained all that she desired. The venerable invalid, she said, was particularly fond of both the little ladies—meaning my two girls—but Miss Ellen, the youngest, she quite doated upon; and, if I would consent to her taking the child with her, she was sure it would be the greatest cordial to her mother in the whole world.—I represented to the good creature, the additional fatigue she would incur, by burthening herself with so helpless a companion; but finding her still very solicitous to gain her point, I offered her the convenience of some sort of carriage. She declined the proposal with many thanks; averring, that in every species of covered vehicle, she was always ill; and making so light of the walk, and of the distance, that, in the end, I assented to her scheme.

"It was yet early, and the nurse set

forth on the expedition with the delighted little girl, just as Mr. Somerville and I were going to breakfast. I charged her to return before it was dark, and, relying on her punctuality, thought no more of the matter till towards three or four o'clock. The day, which had hitherto continued serene and fair, then began to change. Some heavy clouds lowered in the horizon; a cold, bleak wind whistled through the trees, and, in short, every indication that could prognosticate a wet, and, perhaps, stormy afternoon, successively appeared.—I then most heartily repented the too easy consent which I had given. Mr. Somerville was out; but I applied for the opinion of the gardener, and of every weather-wise domestic about the house. They all confirmed my apprehensions; and I was meditating to send one of the most intelligent amongst them to meet the poor pedestrians with warm cloaks and an umbrella. But, lo! at that very moment, a loud clap of thunder, followed by a tremendous shower of mingled hail and rain, gave so serious an increase to my alarm, that I instantly ordered one of the carriages

to be got ready, purposing to go in it myself in search of the dripping wanderers.

"Mr. Somerville, meanwhile, came in, and whilst the horses were hastily putting to, we still remained in the hall, lamenting the unfortunate termination of an excursion so auspiciously begun. Suddenly a man, whose streaming apparel deluged the pavement as he entered, rushed into the house. He carried under his ample great coat some sort of bundle, and supported upon one arm my scared, adventurous, drenched, and contrite nurse.

"Mr. Somerville and I, at the same instant, exclaimed—

"Where is Ellen?—Margaret, for Heaven sake! where have you left Ellen?"

"Here's Ellen!" answered the supposed *bundle*, peeping, laughingly, from under the stranger's coat.

"We both flew to her, and with grateful joy received her into our arms, scarcely less dry and warm than if she had just descended from the nursery.

"How infinitely are we indebted to you!" we cried, addressing her unknown

protector; "this is an obligation never to be repaid nor forgotten!"

"Whilst thus speaking, we sought to obtain a view of his countenance, obscured at once by his dripping hat and the darkness attending the storm. He had not yet uttered a word, and the plainness of his garb indicated nothing beyond a farmer in easy circumstances. We were anxious to find in him a person of our own condition; since no reward so readily suggested itself to our hearts to offer him, as our devoted friendship.

"At last the invidious hat was removed, and whilst it was undergoing a manful swing to relieve it from the superabundant moisture pouring from it, a face so noble, so ingenuous, so prepossessing, presented itself to our view, that we mutually and instantly concurred in thinking it could belong to no one who was not 'of the better order of beings.'—Adela, you no doubt have guessed that it was the warm hearted successor of the cold-hearted Lord Ennerdale, whom we had the happiness of beholding!—Just as the storm was beginning, he

had discovered my poor Margaret, exhausted by fatigue, yet terrified at the approaching deluge, seated on a bank by the road side, at the distance of nearly a mile from the house. She was out of the reach of any better shelter than the trees or hedges afforded, and fully aware of the insecurity of her post, yet too weary and dispirited to stir. Ellen, insensible of apprehension, was playing around her, and busily engaged in seeking for primroses along the bank. To all Margaret's exhortations to come and sit quietly under the protection of her cloak till the rain was over, she gaily refused to listen.

"Lord Ennerdale was struck by the folly of the woman in supposing that so insufficient a covering would preserve the child from the effects of the torrent which he saw impending. He stopped, and urged her, almost angrily, to exert herself, and make the best of her way home.

"Lord help us, and deliver us!" exclaimed Margaret, more disposed to cry than to move, "I have not strength to carry little miss a yard farther, if my life depended upon it! And I'm sure she won't be able

to walk fast enough herself to escape one drop of rain, let me hurry her ever so! Why, Sir, I have had her in my arms this morning (to be sure it was my own fault for asking to take her with me) during a walk of seven miles; and now, I am so knocked up, I can neither lift my hand to my head, nor set one foot before the other."

"Her good-natured auditor, when he had heard this account, ceased his remonstrances, and, without waiting to inquire how far she had to go, or to whom the child belonged, he raised the little creature in his arms, at the very moment the clouds began most furiously to discharge their contents. Bidding the nurse lean on him for support, he then set forward with all the dispatch which, when thus doubly encumbered, he could use.

"Do you think, my dear Adela, we could learn these particulars unmoved? Far otherwise; whilst Margaret, in the overflowing thankfulness of her heart, detailed the whole history in the hall, we were ready to embrace her humane conductor, and could scarcely hear her to the end before we besought him to spend the remainder of

the day with us, and to suffer Mr. Somerville to furnish him with dry garments.

"After a moment's hesitation, he said, with a smile, that though it was but an awkward thing to a man to be his own usher, yet, as he was well assured, that he must be personally a stranger to us, he thought it would be scarcely honourable to profit from our hospitality, without informing us to whom it was extended."—"If," continued he, "I might be permitted to add the privilege of calling myself your friend, to the pleasant circumstance of being one of your nearest neighbours, I should always consider this as a day of peculiar good fortune. You have honoured with an invitation, the owner, and, at present, the solitary inhabitant of Mordington Castle."

"Perhaps you are of opinion, Adela," pursued Mrs. Somerville, "that onhearing such intelligence, I ought immediately, in consideration of the duel with Julius, to have sent for the longest broom in the house, and have swept the unhallowed intruder out at the door! But, in good truth, I was seized with no such sisterly fanaticism. The service our new friend had rendered us; my

conviction, that in the unfortunate affair of the challenge, Julius had been the sole aggressor—and above all, the favourable impression wrought upon my mind by the Earl's truly engaging deportment and appearance—these combined motives, some rational, and some, I allow, a little feminine, induced me to persevere no less frankly in my civilities after he had announced himself, than before I had any suspicion of his lineage and descent."

"A thousand thanks, my dearest sister," cried Adela, "for this recital; it has given me very great pleasure. But how much do I wish it could have been made in the presence of Julius! Might it not have produced in him a disposition to relax a little in his prejudices against Lord Ennerdale?"

"Nothing is less probable. I really believe that one great reason why Julius hates him so bitterly is, that he finds people in general so much inclined to like him. The more he hears therefore in his commendation, from *us*, in particular, the more will he become confirmed in his injustice. The wisest plan, I am persuaded, which we can any of

us pursue, will be to talk of him as little before Julius as possible."

Mr. Somerville now enquired upon what terms Lord Ennerdale was with the General?

"They frequently meet," replied Adela, "and without the slightest symptoms of hostility."

"Does he visit in Berkeley Square?"

"He never has whilst I have been there."

"When did you see him last?"

"Yesterday; he overtook me in the park to announce your welcome arrival."

Mr. Somerville now abruptly started up—"He knows then, that we are in town?" cried he—"That being the case, I will go this minute and ask him to dinner."

His lady made no opposition to the scheme, and he instantly sallied forth to put it in execution; promising, at Adela's request, likewise to call upon her brother."

CHAP. X.

CONTRAST.

When the two sisters were alone—"You boasted much in your last letter, my dear girl," said Mrs. Somerville, "of your entire

exemption, as far as relates to Julius, from every sentiment of fear: but tell me honestly, is there not at least as much of this feeling as of love in the attentive observance which you seem disposed to pay him?"

"No, dearest Elinor, there is not indeed. —I am almost apprehensive that it may sound arrogant again to declare, that, except my father, I am not afraid of any one!—There are many, indeed, whom I would not wilfully offend for the world; and Julius is of the number: but the sole reason is, that I feel grateful to him and warmly attached. Others, I should be equally reluctant to displease, from a sense of duty; and some, I would remain at peace with, merely to avoid the trouble of a quarrel."

"Then you are determined not to allow Julius to influence your attachments or aversions?"

"I never will refuse to hear his 'pleaded reasons:' but, after hearing them, if I remain unconvinced, I hope to preserve sufficient steadiness to act without any servile and disingenuous deference to his opinions. In regard to Lord Ennerdale, I was at first apprehensive, from the extraordinary um-

brage his speaking to me gave my brother, that something discreditable attached itself to his character. Had that suspicion proved well founded, I will do myself the justice to assert, that not even Julius himself could have dictated to me more dislike of Lord Ennerdale than I should have been ready to feel. Knowing how upright and amiable he had once been, I should have hated him for letting the world so easily corrupt a naturally good disposition. But I now more clearly comprehend the whole affair. I see that my brother is under the guidance of a stubborn and contracted spirit of inveteracy. I forebode much useless discussion with him: but whilst the object of his aversion appears to me in a blameless light, I will accustom myself, as much as possible, to listen to the misrepresentations of his enemies with composure, and to act as though I heard them not."

Mrs. Somerville was highly gratified by this speech:

"Perhaps," said she, "I am hardly competent, in the present case, to be an impartial judge of your determination: but it seems to me so equitable and wise, that I

know not how any thing could be added to its propriety."

In the course of the morning, Mrs. Cleveland and Jemima paid a visit in Cumberland Place. Adela was in her own apartment when they arrived, and knew not that they had been in the house till after they had left it.

"I was very sure," said Mrs. Somerville, "that you had no particular wish to see them; and as their stay was short, and they only enquired how you did, without expressing any anxiety to make the enquiry in person, I thought that it was needless to disturb you. Our good Aunt looks as much like one of the evergreen beauties of Cleopatra's stock, whom 'age cannot wither,' as when I last saw her. Were her temper but as smooth as her brow, what an Aunt would she be! But, my dear Adela, can you interpret to me the meaning of poor Jemima's moody aspect?—She put me in mind, the whole time she staid, of the woman Madame de Sévigné describes, who appeared as if she had signed a compact with Satan, and the day was approaching to deliver herself up! I assure you, there was a sullenness in

her countenance quite ominous; and she, who used to be the greatest prater in the family, scarcely uttered a dozen words whilst the visit lasted. What can all this be? Is it disappointed ambition? or does she really fancy herself in love?"

"I believe," said Adela, "that it is a little the result of both. We cannot tell what construction she may have put upon any past attentions which Lord Ennerdale has shewn her. Certain it is, that she now seems very miserable; and I am sometimes tempted to think, he carried his unmeaning civilities further than, in strict consideration of her future happiness, he ought to have done.—No rational creature could have imbibed so confirmed a predilection without receiving some adequate encouragement."

"But who has been rash enough to assert that Jemima *is* a rational creature? One characteristic of such a sort of animal, which she used to have—laughing—she has now given up; and I really know not any other, which in strict integrity she could be said to possess. She has quickness, and volubility, and skill, to a certain extent, in managing her own little pitiful cabals: but if by ra-

tionality, you mean judgment, justice, moderation, and undesigning frankness—Jemima has not a particle of these qualities in her nature."

At this moment, Mr. Somerville returned.

"I have seen your brother," cried he, addressing Adela, "and he is coming here by-and-by, to shake hands with Elinor. Lord Ennerdale cannot dine with us, but he will call in the evening. I found with him a relation, a Mr. Annesley, who married his late wife's sister. They were both engaged to dine at Mrs. Elmer's."—

"Do you know that lady, my dear Elinor?" enquired Adela—

"Very slightly: but why do you ask?"—

"Because I ought to call upon her. She left a card for me in Berkeley-Square, and Lord Ennerdale gave me rather a serious sort of lecture for omitting to return it."—

"He was perfectly right!" cried Mr. Somerville; "she is a woman of irreproachable character.". . . .

"And of some eccentricity!" interrupted his wife—"However, the visit shall be scrupulously paid to-morrow."—

In the evening, Julius, according to appointment, made his appearance. He greeted Mrs. Somerville with affectionate pleasure; was in high spirits, and congratulated Adela very heartily on being emancipated from her recent prison.

"Prison!" repeated Mrs. Somerville, with surprise, "I thought she went out perpetually."

"Whether it was their fault for making every engagement disagreeable," resumed Julius, "or her's, for being too ready to think them so, I know not: but it is a fact, that for this last week or ten days, she has been as completely immured as if sentenced for her sins to solitary confinement."—

He then asked to see the children; but being told that they had been gone to bed above an hour, he said—"well, good rest betide them! I never invited myself to look at babies before; but I thought it would be a pretty compliment to Elinor, as their mamma."—

"And now, I suppose," cried Mrs. Somerville, laughing, "your conscience will be at rest, if you don't see them for this month!"

"It certainly is, now, your affair more than mine. I have done the civil thing once, and I won't promise you that I shall remember to do it again."—

A knock at the street door, announcing another visitor, was then heard. Mrs. Somerville and Adela, anticipating the entrance of Lord Ennerdale, looked at each other with some trepidation. But Julius, without observing it, went on gaily talking, till a servant, coming up stairs, announced Lord Ennerdale.

Adela ventured not to raise her eyes from the work which she had a moment before snatched up. Mr. and Mrs. Somerville, however, both approached the Earl with great cordiality, and thanked him for being so faithful to his promise—

"When I heard where you intended to dine, my Lord," said Mrs. Somerville, "I own, I had but little hope of seeing you. How is it that you could contrive to depart from your agreeable hostess so early?"

"Early and late are comparative terms," replied he;—"to you, my dear Mrs. Somerville, my visit may appear unseasonably

early; to myself, I assure you, it seems unconscionably late."

He then advanced towards Adela, and passing near her brother, turned his head to look at him. The deepest crimson dyed the cheeks of both, as their eyes first met: in those of Julius, instantly appeared an expression of kindling hostility, which it was evident he did not even wish to disguise; and in his attitude and whole demeanour, there was a manifestation of pride and stateliness, that not even Mr. Somerville could view without alarm.

Lord Ennerdale saw it all: but he saw it with the coolness of a man determined, in the presence of ladies, not to exhibit any irascibility, not to indulge any intemperate feelings. Slightly, but calmly bowing, therefore, he proceeded forward, and, in his accustomed tone of voice, said to Adela:—

"I am charged by Mrs. Elmer with many compliments to you, and strictly enjoined to say, that she hopes Mrs. Somerville's arrival in town will deprive you of every excuse for not letting her see more of you."

Adela, recovering her own tranquillity by the view of his, bestowed upon him a smile of the gentlest gratitude for his forbearance, and cheerfully answered :—

"My sister and I came to a resolution, this very morning, of deferring no longer than till to-morrow our first visit to her."

They then all arranged themselves round the table at which she was sitting; and Mrs. Somerville, not wholly without success, endeavoured to introduce subjects of general conversation, and to establish ease and harmony amongst all present. Her newly arrived guest most readily gave into her design; he was communicative, yet no monopolist of attention; and animated without affecting any peculiar display of gaiety. Adela had never beheld him to more advantage, nor ever witnessed so genuine an instance of native good-temper blended with acquired good-breeding.

The contrast offered by Julius, obstinately silent, and sullenly observant, was striking and grievous. He seemed determined either to out-stay the Earl, or so exactly to measure the length of his own visit, as to depart at

the same moment. Each of his sisters occasionally addressed him: but he disdained the ceremony of answering them; looked more gloomy in proportion as he was more courted; and had his influence and authority been adequate to his unsocial humour, would have thrown a complete damp over the spirits of the whole party, and have sealed up every body's lips as closely as his own.

On any other occasion, Mrs. Somerville, availing herself of the privileges of eldership, would not have scrupled to animadvert upon his ill-humour with the raillery it deserved: but she knew the danger of exasperating still further a spirit already upon the *qui vive*, and prompt, on the slightest provocation, to burst out into a blaze. She therefore hazarded no observation upon his reserve, and not even an expostulating look was directed towards him. Growing weary, at length, of the unamusing part he was performing, and recollecting also an engagement which called him elsewhere, he suddenly started up, and without individually addressing any body, bluntly uttered a growl-

ing, "Good night," and made his truly-welcome exit.

Lord Ennerdale, from motives of delicacy, and the rest of the party, from feelings of shame, forbore, after he was gone, from making any remark upon his conduct, or from even mentioning his name. All, however, were sensible of the relief afforded by his departure; and an increase of cheerfulness resulted from it, which rendered them so unconscious of the progress of time, that midnight arrived, ere any idea of separating had occurred to them.

CHAP. XI.

MORTIFICATION.

THE next morning, Mrs. Somerville and Adela drove to Mrs. Elmer's as soon as the accustomed hour of visiting permitted it, and not only found her at home, but were received with the most flattering distinction. She volunteered to Adela her offers of service as a chaperon, whenever Mrs. Somerville was disinclined to go out; pressed her

to accept a seat that night in her box at the Opera; lent to both the sisters several newly published books, and, in short, was so liberal of her courtesy, and so obviously desirous to ingratiate herself into their favour, that after quitting her, Mrs. Somerville could not help laughingly observing—

"You have had a warm friend, Adela, at the court of this fashionable sovereign! I have for some years been accustomed to meet her occasionally, and we have each stood upon the other's visiting-list almost from the time I first married: but so graciously disposed as she appeared at this morning's interview, I had never yet in any degree beheld her. Pray commend me to a continuation of the good offices which I already owe to the favourite and counsellor whose interest with this lady has been so successfully exerted for yourself."—

"I assuredly will," answered Adela, smiling; "But tell me, my discerning and nicely analysing sister, what is your real opinion of Mrs. Elmer? You speak of her in a way that leads me to think, you entertain no very high esteem for her."—

"She is—but *entre nous* be it spoken—

a sort of character which I should tremble to see you much connected with, were I less confident of your good sense, your good taste, and your good principles. She is not addicted to any glaring improprieties: she is no gamestress; she has escaped all stigma on the score of gallantry; she pays her tradesmen, and she behaves tolerably to her family and dependents. But her craving appetite for notoriety, makes her guilty of many outrageous breaches of true feminine delicacy. She talks loud in public; she aims always at being the principal object of general attention, the 'cynosure of neighbouring eyes.' She is confident, familiar, and overbearing in her manners towards men; and very often insolently negligent towards women. To say the truth, she constantly reminds me, though ambitious of being thought original, of an humble copyist of some saucy woman of fashion in a novel or a play. These are characters which, if their delineators have any other meaning in describing them, than to write an amusing and *vendible* book, are probably less intended for imitation than for beacons. But they are often so sportively, so glitteringly drawn; so much popularity

seems attached, and so much influence is ascribed to them, that they allure infinitely more followers than the less flippant and imperfect heroines with whom they are meant to contrast. Let not Mrs. Elmer, however, dearest Adela, allure *you* to renounce the unaffected and unobtrusive simplicity of demeanour, for which I am persuaded, that, even in this sophisticated town, you will gain many sincere admirers. Never adopt the odious maxim, so openly in vogue amongst some of our Misses, that a slight degree of affectation is a *necessary* ingredient to procure attention; the young and handsome debase themselves by such paltry arts; and what charm can they give to the old and ugly?"—

"With such a friend as you are, to guide and counsel me, I trust, my dear Elinor, I am tolerably safe. But is Lord Ennerdale quite justifiable in wishing me so much to form an intimacy with a woman like Mrs. Elmer?"—

"Lord Ennerdale has known her from the time he left College—known her, till the glare of her follies has mellowed upon his observation, and lost all its power strongly

to affect his senses. He would distinguish them, no doubt, most plainly in a new acquaintance; but long habit blunts our sensibility equally of defects and beauties. Besides, I am firmly of opinion, that very few men are competent to decide upon a woman's real merit, till they are old enough to have daughters grown up. As parents, they view female manners, they listen to female conversation, and they attend to female propriety with feelings widely differing from those with which they cursorily marked all these particulars whilst only seeking, as young and unconnected individuals, their own amusement, and the shortest way of murdering time. Lord Ennerdale, also, I make no doubt, takes into consideration, your evident superiority to the common run of unreflecting girls, and deems you safer, because he knows you to be more reasonable. He has a high opinion of Mrs. Elmer's goodness of heart; he is witness to her being visited and courted by women of the first respectability; he knows her parties to be the pleasantest and most attractive in town; and he hears from her own lips, that she is particularly desirous to cultivate your acquaintance. Are

not these sufficient reasons to excuse the zeal with which he seeks to forward her views?"

"There is one test," said Adela, "to which if I could bring this affair, I should be perfectly contented."

"What is that?"

"I should like to ascertain, whether the intercourse he so solicitously recommends to me, he would, with equal readiness, sanction in his sister."

"Oh, I can fully satisfy your doubts on that head. Not only Miss Mordington, but old Lady Ennerdale, the severest advocate for the banishment from society of all suspicious desert, visit Mrs. Elmer without the smallest scruple. If I have been more backward in seeking her society, it is because I do not like her, and my acquaintance amongst those whom I *do* like, is sufficiently extensive.—Now are you disposed to be quite in charity again with your old friend Algernon?"

"Yes, dear Elinor; for what a well-principled man would countenance in his sister, no other woman has a right to think him inconsiderate for approving in her also."

"*Plato, thou reason'st well!*—I like your criterion much; and the inference you have drawn from it still better."

Julius had departed from Cumberland Place in so indignant a disposition, that he almost formed the rash determination of never going thither again. Several days, indeed, elapsed, during which he wholly kept aloof; and as perseverance in error does but strengthen and confirm its inveteracy, and they who have long gone wrong become ashamed at last of going right, it is probable he might have adhered to his unbrotherly resolution throughout the whole season, had not Adela prevailed upon Mrs. Somerville to storm his castle, as she called it, and to compel him, first to a parley, and then to an accommodation.

In plain terms, the two sisters drove one morning to Hertford Street at an hour that gave him no pretence to deny them admission upon the plea of being from home: and affecting to deride or overlook all his repulsive airs, they forced him to hold a conference, which, however unpromising at the outset, ended in his consenting to join their party that day at dinner, upon the

express condition, that no guest avowedly obnoxious to him should be admitted.

"We are so willing, my dear Julius," said Mrs. Somerville, "to contribute our share towards spoiling you in your manhood as much as you were spoilt in your infancy, that neither my husband nor I will object, *now and then*, to any terms which you may chuse to propose previous to granting us the honour of your high and mighty presence. To-day all is safe. There is not the smallest chance of your encountering, within our walls, the object you so irreconcileably detest, for he is gone down to Windsor till next Tuesday. But, by way of providing against future accidents, would it not be a good plan to keep in pay, between this house and ours, a sort of running footman, to convey hourly intelligence to you of all the exits from, and entrances into, our mansion? Will you contribute your quota towards the expences of such a domestic?"

"Do you then suppose that I wish to avoid your idol from motives of fear?" cried the irritable Julius—"Let me but meet him upon neutral ground, and I care not if I jostle against him every hour in the day!

But to sit and hear him flattered, fawned upon, concurred with on every subject, exalted in his own imagination into a phœnix, a demi-god!—By Heaven, it makes me sick!"

"This is not being so noble an enemy, my dear Julius," said Mrs. Somerville, "as, notwithstanding all the imperfections of your character, its openness and generosity would lead one to expect. I can allow for the madness of unpremeditated passion: had I been born of the masculine gender, I can easily suppose, that, 'jealous in honour, sudden and quick in quarrel,' I might have been as petulant and waspish an Achilles as yourself. But then, I am willing also to believe that, when the phrenzy of the moment was past—when a personal encounter with my adversary had taken place, in which either his blood or my own had been shed, I should have sought (for the next indulgence of my prowess) a new antagonist. You, on the contrary, seem but the more confirmed in your hatred for having, once already, *settled your difference*, as it is called, with your opponent. You will not allow us to suppose that it is a difference which ever

can be settled! Ah, Julius! is this real bravery? Is it a proof of a good, a liberal-hearted nature?"

"Curses on the man," exclaimed Julius, in violent emotion, "for whose sake I am thus schooled and lectured!—Elinor, I cannot—I will not bear it! His name is abhorrent to my ears! his sight loathsome to my eyes! You all, I perceive, are in a confederacy to support him. He has been the chief standard of excellence with Adela nearly from her infancy. Little does she suspect upon what fallacious grounds! You have now elected him, Elinor, to the highest rank amongst your own objects of worship. Somerville more than participates—he even exceeds you both in the same species of infatuation; and that designing or romantic fool, Jemima, has no shame in proclaiming that she is dying for him!—Is not all this enough from one family? Why must *I*, likewise, bow to the image you have set up?"

"Well, well," cried Mrs. Somerville, "a truce with these useless bickerings. Remember you have passed your word to dine with us this day; and remember that, were

we, in compliance with your humour, to banish Lord Ennerdale entirely from our house, you can scarcely enter any assembly, any club, any public place, or even pace through the streets, without beholding him. You cannot deny him the privilege of breathing the same air with you; you cannot interdict him from fire and water, and force him either to starve, or go into voluntary exile. Take patience, then, dear Julius; and rather endeavour to relax in your hatred towards him, than suffer it to extinguish your affection for us."

This conversation, impatiently as it had been borne at the time, operated, however, some good effect upon Julius. It induced him neither entirely to relinquish his visits in Cumberland Place, nor to make so capital a crime of the favourable reception which he still saw granted there to Lord Ennerdale. Yet there was one observation which he made during these visits, with great, and, perhaps, not unfounded displeasure, which he was eager to seize the earliest opportunity of communicating to Adela:

"Can you endure," cried he, "to let Ennerdale think, because he is rich and a peer,

and you are poor and a commoner, that you willingly stand by to see him courted to become your admirer? The Somervilles, in their zeal to behold you a Countess, are making you so cheap to him, that he himself will be the first to punish their folly and your meanness, by treating you with contempt and impertinence!"

"Good Heaven, Julius!" exclaimed Adela, extremely shocked, "what bitter strength of language do you use!—When have they made me cheap to him? When have they shewn any desire to obtain for me his admiration?"

"Are you really so blind to their proceedings? Then thank me for opening your eyes, and profit from my warning. Even if your own secret wishes correspond with theirs, remember that it is always bad policy to accept the interference of indiscreet coadjutors. But I will now bring forward some instances in support of my assertion. When Ennerdale is present, what subject is ever started that does not instantly call forth from Mr. Somerville an affected appeal to your opinion? What engagement is ever proposed for you and Elinor which he does not seek

to make Ennerdale a party in? Whom will he, at table, ever suffer to sit beside you, except this titled visitor? To whom else does he half so eagerly endeavour to make you exhibit your talents? And to whom else does he so clumsily, so surfeitingly, expatiate upon the sweetness of your temper, and your unrivalled qualifications for domestic life?—If these glaring, and indelicate evidences of Somerville's purpose, are so obvious even to *me*, judge how infinitely more manifest they must be to the penetrating Elinor! Yet she attempts no method of checking or discountenancing them, and therefore, in my estimation, is still more censurable than her bustling husband. It rests, then, with you, Adela, to assert your own dignity by repressing these ill-judged advances: and, as a further incitement to you so to do, I will now confide to you, what was the original cause of the offence which I conceived against this arrogant Ennerdale at Eton. It was reported to me, shortly after my arrival, that he had been heard declaiming with particular eloquence upon the dishonour that was attached to

being descended from parents who had been *divorced!*"

Adela started, and a pang of the keenest mortification shot through her bosom.

"I am not asserting," continued her brother, "that when this depreciating language was held, Ennerdale knew that it applied either to you, or to me: possibly he did not. But it has excited in me a resentment against him, which no time can ever extinguish.—And ask yourself, Adela,—have you much chance of subjugating the proud heart of one, who, whilst still a boy, proclaimed, that the infamy of such a parentage would teach him to hate his existence, and to regard an early death as the only blessing to be prayed for?"

"Alas, alas!" exclaimed the deeply humbled Adela, "every succeeding day more feelingly convinces me that he was right!—I came to town, fearless and confiding. The errors of my unhappy mother were far from being thought of with insensibility by me: but I trusted that they were now either little remembered, or, that being guiltless of misconduct myself, the world would not have had the harshness to

visit them thus strictly upon my head. That hope is over; and with it has vanished almost every sentiment of security with which I used to raise my eyes in society."

"This," cried Julius, concerned to see her so seriously dejected, "is going too far. The frailties of Lady Rosalvan affect not the purity of *your* character. Why should you suffer them to make you droop thus despairingly?—Revive, my dear Adela, to self-respect—to a proper sense of your own worth; and let not the injurious fastidiousness of *one* individual, give you so disquieting a diffidence of the candour and justice of all the rest of the world."

He then kindly shook her by the hand, and departed.

But had he sought during half a century for reasons to work upon Adela's mind, he could have found none more infallibly adapted to his purpose than those which he had now employed.

A simple accusation of harbouring ambitious projects, she could either have repelled, or have calmly submitted to; for she would have known it to be unfounded. But an intimation that even her best friends, through

mistaken zeal, were rendering themselves suspected, and her, perhaps, contemptible in the eyes of Lord Ennerdale, at first grieved her, and then awakened her pride beyond any suggestion that could have been devised. Julius, aware of the effect which he had produced, had left the dart to rankle in her bosom, without blunting its point by staying to repeat the blow.

The placid reliance on his ever-friendly meaning, which had hitherto rendered Adela so easy and cheerful in the presence of her former associate, was now exchanged for a punctilious distrust, a habit of weighing his words, and watching the expression of his looks, which embittered the pleasure of every interview, and constituted her own perpetual torment. A random sentence, a glance, a smile, had power to perplex or alarm her. Mr. Somerville's commendations, when uttered before Lord Ennerdale, threw her into an agony: and so powerful became her dread of incurring any slight, or of being suspected to entertain any designs, that the most artificial coquette never employed more calculation to *win*, than Adela

now used to *shun* opportunities of being observed and called into notice.

This sensitive and shrinking delicacy it was difficult to repress within such just limits as should secure it from the reproach of caprice or captiousness. Adela escaped the imputation by taking the utmost pains to disguise her new-raised fears under a semblance of quiet indifference, which should lead to the belief that all she did was the effect of accident; that her avoidance of every distinction from Lord Ennerdale was unpremeditated; and that, if she invariably drew back from his assiduities, it was because they were of too little importance to her to be thought of, or desired.

Yet, though deeply sensible that something was wanting in her manner of receiving him which he had never missed till now, Lord Ennerdale knew not how to define, even to his own feelings, what that something was. She was retired without being forbiddingly reserved; she was silent without wearing a look of displeasure; and in studying to avoid all petty obligations, she seemed rather impelled by a rational love of

independence than by any wish to repress amity.

Here was nothing on which he could found a specific complaint;—yet here was enough to make her completely different to the Adela he had at first found her. Mrs. Somerville was no less aware than himself of the change; but not in any degree better able to trace its origin, or to satisfy her own mind as to its exact meaning.

CHAP. XII.

HIEROGLYPHICS.

One morning, whilst the two sisters were sitting at a late breakfast, after a ball which Adela had been at the preceding night, Mrs. Somerville remarked that her companion was so singularly abstracted, and answered every question which she addressed to her with such evident effort, and so little interest in what she was saying, that she was induced at length to fear, that something unpleasant was the matter.

"Did any thing extraordinary happen to you last night?" enquired she; "did your

partner, or partners, whoever they might be, lay serious siege to your heart, and send you home with the red-hot question still tingling in your ears?

"No," replied Adela, "I completely escaped any such tremendous attack."

"Yet, you are not in your usual frame of mind. Tell me what it is that so particularly occupies you. You can reveal nothing which shall not be safe in my custody."

"That would be a great deal more than I should have any right to expect."

"How so?"

"Why, my dear Elinor, what equity would there be in expecting you to keep my counsel, if I cannot keep it myself?"

"This is quite in the spirit of one of La Rochefoucault's maxims: I believe you gleaned it from his consolatory book. Now, to prove that I also have studied this amiable painter of human nature, I will quote to you a sentence of his, the most generous that ever fell from his pen of wormwood:—'*It is more disgraceful to distrust our friends, than to be deceived by them.*'

"Perhaps he is right: but it is a disgrace which, in this instance, I must be content

to incur, or to merit the charge of egregious folly. Yet, I would be undisguised with you if I could: but you must be aware, my dear sister, that whatever is entrusted to you, might just as well be revealed to Mr. Somerville at once."—

"This charge of unlimited confidence in Mr. Somerville, is not altogether well founded. I could withhold from him the secret of another, though I have made it a rule to banish from our intercourse all reserve respecting my own affairs. Be frank, then, my dear Adela; and, as you do not deny that something peculiar engrosses you, make trial of my powers of discretion, and honestly avow what is passing in your thoughts."

Adela shook her head, and smiling significantly, placed her finger on her lip.

"Must it not be?" resumed Mrs. Somerville—"well, then, I will endeavour to submit, and say no more about it. I might lose my temper, but I see no chance of obtaining your confidence. Ring the bell, my fair Prudentia. I am going to order the carriage for an airing, and shall take the

children with me. Are you disposed to be of the baby party?"

Adela readily agreed to accompany them; and then, till the carriage drove to the door, retired into the back drawing-room, and sat down to the piano-forte.

Presently, during a pause in her performance, a quick rap at the street door reached her ears, and the next minute, she heard the voices and steps of two persons ascending the stairs. She kept her post, but her fingers shook, and whilst hesitating whether again to place them on the keys, she could not avoid remonstrating with herself on the flutter into which she had been thrown—

"Why should *I* lose any portion of my accustomed composure?" cried she; "I have nothing to reproach myself with; I have wounded no one's feelings; I can fearlessly look up without the danger of meeting an eye filled by myself with unmerited mortification."—

Yet, though this little soliloquy contributed to tranquillize her, she would not renew her musical employment, lest the sound of the instrument should attract au-

ditors into the room: but softly rising, she took up a book, and seating herself near a window, began reading.

How impossible it is, however, in a situation contiguous to a group of talkers, to attend, either with profit or pleasure, to the best written book, we must all have experienced. The voices issuing from the front room perpetually interfered with what she was trying to understand; and though her eyes traced the lines before her, and she proceeded methodically, without the omission of a single word to the bottom of the pages, her mind took in no part of their meaning.—

"I will not be thus baffled!" cried she, smiling at her, hitherto, unsuccessful efforts:—and applying her hands to the sides of her head, to deaden the sounds that molested her, she began, though in a subdued voice, reading aloud. The expedient had its use; and she had just achieved the difficult task of comprehending nearly a dozen lines, when one of the folding doors, leading into the adjoining room, was opened, and Mr. Somerville made his appearance.

"Good morning, Adela," cried he, advancing towards her; "what are you about here? muttering spells over some cabalistical book, and stopping your ears to avoid disturbance? Do come and look at her, Lord Ennerdale—and, Elinor, come and tell us what she is about?"—

Adela closed the volume, and looking at her brother-in-law with great good-humour, said—

"You have done me but little mischief by this interruption, for whilst you were all talking in the next room, I found it nearly impossible to know what I was reading."

"I thought you had shut yourself up here," said Mrs. Somerville, "to do penance for your recent inflexibility!"—

"No;—I never was in a less humble and repentant mood."—

"It is for me, I am afraid," said Lord Ennerdale, "to be the only penitent of the party.—Did I not appear, last night, my dear Miss Cleveland, very justly to merit your displeasure?"—

"No, indeed," replied Adela, with a composure which it was impossible to be-

lieve assumed—"I was extremely pleased to see that you were able, before the evening was quite over, to partake in its amusements."

Mr. Somerville now zealously exclaimed—"Adela is a girl of ten thousand! Who else, Lord Ennerdale, would have treated you with half such lenity?"

"Ridiculous!" cried she, colouring, and much provoked, yet forcing a laugh, "how well you exemplify, dear Mr. Somerville, my brother's assertion, that all your geese are swans!"

"I am completely at a loss to understand what any of you are talking about;" cried Mrs. Somerville, regarding them alternately with much perplexity.

"Why, has not your sister," said her husband, "told you how shabbily she was treated last night at Mrs. Copeland's ball?"

"Not a word."

"Well, then, she is either a phœnix of generosity, or she has no feeling!"

"None, at least, of causeless irritability, I hope," said Adela.

"Well, well, however that may be, tell

your story now to Elinor; I want to know what *she* will think of it."

"A pretty figure I shall make," cried Lord Ennerdale, "whilst your sister complies with this injunction!"

"Oh, you deserve it—you thoroughly deserve it, my good friend! So, begin, Adela."

"My story, as you call it, will soon be told. This same restless good-humoured husband of yours, Elinor, was anxious at the beginning of the evening to get me a partner. I proposed his dancing with me himself; but that, I believe, he was too fine to think feasible; he therefore asked Lord Ennerdale to stand up with me, who declined it on account of a sprained ancle."

"And did you not dance at all?" interrupted Mrs. Somerville.

"O yes, six dances; and then, fancying she heard our carriage called, Mrs. Ross, my *chaperon*, escorted by your husband, took me down stairs, intending to come away. But it was a mistake; neither servants nor carriage had arrived, and we thought it would be more amusing to go up

again among the dancers, than to wait in an empty supper-room."

"Now comes the precious part of the history!" cried Mr. Somerville, impatiently. —"Go on, Adela; when you re-entered the ball-room, what did you see?"

"Nothing very shocking;" she smilingly answered,—"A lame man restored to the use of his feet."

"What, Lord Ennerdale dancing!" cried her sister.

"Even so—And now let me go and get ready for our airing."

"Hear me first, I entreat," cried Lord Ennerdale, with some earnestness; "I know not whether you condescended to observe *how* I danced; but the fact is, I walked, or rather limped through my task in a most deplorable manner; and that with a poor girl who had had no partner the whole evening, and whose mother absolutely pressed me into her service."

"The poor girl, however, was extremely pretty!" dryly remarked Mr. Somerville.

To this the Earl made no answer, but, turning to Mrs. Somerville, said—

"You do not make any observation upon

what you have just heard. Does the circumstance tell so much against me, that it will admit of no comment—in my presence?"

"Taking it for granted," said she, good-humouredly, "that your defence is perfectly correct, and that it was not caprice which induced you to prefer the pretty girl recommended by her mother, to the poor girl proposed to you by her brother, I think your conduct not wholly inexcusable. You thought my sister had retired; and sturdy, fashionable mammas, are a class of people, we all know, who take no denials. Yet, I still am of opinion, that you put Adela's humility, or her pride, (it is difficult to determine which) to a perilous test."

Adela, before this speech was concluded, had left the room; and soon after Mrs. Somerville went up also to prepare for their intended drive. Lord Ennerdale then sat down to a little table, over which was scattered a mixed assemblage of writing and drawing materials, and possessing himself of a card and a pencil, he seemed to be deeply engaged in making some sort of sketch or memorandum. Mr. Somerville

presently left him, and stepped into the front room to look at the newspaper.

In a short time Adela, equipped for her morning excursion, re-appeared.

"I have not displaced any of your drawing apparatus," said Lord Ennerdale, "but seeing a pencil so invitingly at hand, I have traced a little emblematical picture, which I now leave to your ingenuity to interpret."

Adela drew near, and casting her eyes upon the card, she beheld a slight but masterly sketch, representing a shaggy and clumsy bear, submissively crouching, as if in the act of deprecating the anger of a soft and delicate little dove, perched upon one of the leafy bows of a flowering shrub.

He watched her countenance while she laughingly surveyed it, and then expressively said—

"Do you—will you understand it?"

She placed a chair on the opposite side of the table, and providing herself with another card, drew upon it, with admirable facility, a dove bearing an olive branch in its bill, and flying to deposit it at the feet of a sleek and comely bear, the very image of good temper and complacency.

"Does this," said she, presenting to him her card, just as Mrs. Somerville re-entered the room, "prove me quick or slow of comprehension?"

"It proves," cried he, evidently much re-assured, "what I always believed—that your are as intelligent, as you are unaffected and placable!"

"How have you called forth so gracious a compliment, Adela?" said Mrs. Somerville, looking at them both with some surprise—

"Oh, Lord Ennerdale must explain the mystery," cried Adela, gaily;—"he is provided with the means."

So saying, she ran to the door to meet her sister's two children, who were just then brought down, in high spirits at the prospect of going out with their mother. They flew to their youthful aunt, who, taking a hand of each, led them into the next room to bid good morning to their father.

The carriage was now in a few minutes announced, and Lord Ennerdale attended Mrs. Somerville to it, raised each child into it with a light spring, assisted Adela also to ascend, and took his leave.

"I protest it is very lucky for Mr. Somerville," said his lady, as soon as the coach drove forward, "that he met with me before this young man came in my way! Even now, as a grave matron, I am half in love with him."

"He has great success, I perceive, amongst the ladies in general," observed Adela: "but pray did he shew you the two cards?"

"Yes, and their ingenuity amused me extremely. He has taken the *pacific dove*, as he calls it, away with him."

"I hope he means to have an engraving done from it!"

"Its good-natured purport seemed already engraven upon his heart."

"My dearest Elinor," said Adela, laughing, "what admirable *puffers* you and Mr. Somerville are!"

"Puffers! what can you mean?"

"Do not be offended. But it strikes me, that your husband is taking the most diligent pains to convince Lord Ennerdale that *I* am a paragon; whilst you lose no opportunity of persuading me that *he* is the most accomplished of heroes. Now, cer-

tainly, I am not so incredulous of his merit as Julius; yet it is possible I may hear too much of it!"

"I am sorry this idea of our systematically praising him has occurred to you: it will render suspicious to your ears every expression which even common usticemay induce us to utter in your friend Algernon's favour."

"No, no; I will attribute moderate praise to its right source—real regard. But tell me, is not my brother-in-law prone to exalt me, even with affectation, in Lord Ennerdale's presence?"

"To confess the truth—I am afraid he is!"

"Dearest Elinor, how exquisitely candid and kind is this concession! but cannot you, in pity to my feelings, repress in your husband such ill-advised officiousness?"

"I will try:—but he really admires and loves you, Adela, so partially, that you must not be angry with him for sometimes suffering his sentiments to burst forth."

"My dearest sister, I should grieve were you to suspect me of being ungrateful to Mr. Somerville for his affection and good

opinion. They both do me the highest honour, and constitute a very principal part of my present happiness. That he thinks of me better than, perhaps, I deserve, is so far from being a matter of regret to me, that I delight in his delusion: but since we are fairly engaged in the subject, suffer me to declare my sentiments upon it with perfect frankness."

Mrs. Somerville pressed her sister's hand, and looking at her with an air of encouragement, she thus proceeded:

"Your husband knows, that I shall probably have a small fortune; that I am of a good family, and now nearly nineteen. On this last consideration, he seems to think it high time I should be married; and because I am poor, he is anxious I should marry a man who is rich; and because I am well born, he is anxious I should marry a man of elevated rank. He talks vauntingly of my beauty and accomplishments; yet, however exalted may be his real opinion of either, he seems extremely diffident of leaving them to their own operation; and, by way of helping me forward, extols me as the eighth wonder of the world, precisely in

the quarter where such hyperbolical praise will do me the least credit. Do not interrupt me, dear Elinor ;—you must be aware that I allude to Lord Ennerdale, Mr. Somerville, as every word and every action proclaim, is extremely solicitous to affix his Lordship's coronet around my unworthy brows. I thank my kind brother-in-law for his high soaring projects; but, Elinor, caution him to desist, and tell him, that——it will never do!"

"Is Lord Ennerdale so odious to you, then?"

"He is not odious to me at all, simply *as* Lord Ennerdale: but he becomes insupportable to me when I think of him as a decoyed admirer. Besides, he has discernment and delicacy. The first cannot have failed to point out to him your husband's aim; and the second cannot have failed to excite against it his disgust. Now, though I will make no disclaiming speeches, and pretend that I never wish or mean to exchange the name of Cleveland for any other, yet, poor as I am, I am proud:—perhaps the prouder from that very circumstance; and, if a splendid establishment really *could*

be obtained by the sort of measures which Mr. Somerville is pursuing, I should sincerely disdain the purchase at such a price. I may, possibly, be a beauty;—I know that you and my sister Errington are such;—but if I am, it is not therefore needful that I should be a vain ambitious fool. You and I, Elinor, are something better than mere beauties; our flighty Alicia has not much else to boast of. You married for happiness, without the interposition of any busy friends. Mr. Somerville chanced to be rich; you would have loved him just as well had he been comparatively poor. I desire to marry upon the same disinterested principles; to be chosen, not offered; to be sought, not obtruded;—and when thoroughly convinced that the man who thus distinguishes me, is honourable, liberal, worthy—like your Somerville—I care not whether he has a peeress's coronet, or a cottager's straw bonnet to offer me! Such a man I would accept with gratitude, and love with fidelity!"

Whilst speaking thus with the energy of a noble and independent mind, Adela's eyes emitted such brilliancy, her cheeks glowed with so lovely a bloom, and her

whole countenance was lighted up by an expression so spirited, so full of sense and character, that Mrs. Somerville never was more enchanted than when, at that very moment, she saw Lord Ennerdale gallop up to her coach window.

She immediately pulled the check-string, and he then said—

"I beg your pardon for thus pursuing you: but I recollected, dear Mrs. Somerville, just as you drove from your own door, that I had a favour to solicit when I called upon you this morning."—

"I am perfectly disposed to grant it. What is it?" said Mrs. Somerville.

"You have visited my sister-in-law, Lady Isabella Annesley, since you came to town?"

"Yes, I have."—

"Will you then, after your airing, drive to her house, and condescend to enquire for my little twins? They both came up from the country last night, and I am anxious that you should see them, and give me your opinion of their looks. Poor Algernon, I am afraid, is not going on well."—

"I will see him and his sister with plea-

sure; but if delicate health is in the case, you must have an opinion of higher authority than mine, my Lord."—

"He is in medical hands already: but, Mrs. Somerville, the hints which a tender and vigilant mother may suggest for the advantage even of the children of another, I have such high faith in, that I had almost rather be guided in their management by a parent of that description, than by the ablest physician in London."—

"You place great confidence in the discernment given by maternal love. I wish Lady Isabella had been longer invested with the matronly character, and had gained experience in the conduct of a nursery, by having a family of her own."

"She is very kind, and very attentive to my poor little boy and girl: but, as you justly conjecture, she knows no more what would conduce to their health; what system ought to be pursued with them, or what regulations established, than—I do myself. *Et c'est beaucoup dire!*—But I detain you too long.—You promise to call in Portman Square?"

"I do, most faithfully."—

"And you forgive me for interrupting a conversation which, I am sure, must have been highly interesting!—I never saw your sister's countenance more expressively animated, more speakingly alive, than at the moment I rode up!"

"Indeed!" said Mrs. Somerville, looking a little maliciously at the blushing Adela —"And, pray, can you recollect, Adela, what we were talking of?"

"Of straw-bonnets, I believe!" answered she, with happy promptness.

Lord Ennerdale laughed, and shook his head somewhat incredulously, and then, turning his horse, rode away.

"Did you know the mother of these poor children?" enquired Adela, when he was gone.

"By reputation only, and by seeing her occasionally in public. She was beautiful beyond comparison; but I have been assured, thoroughly unamiable."—

"In Lord Ennerdale's case, I should be almost tempted to make a vow against ever entering into a second marriage."—

"Are all women, then, to be classed with his late disagreeable wife?"

"How can he, who has once been so egregiously deceived, flatter himself that his next choice will be any happier? She imposed upon him at a period of life when every human being is supposed to be the most divested of artifice. She often was an inmate with him for months together: he had an opportunity of studying her disposition, even from her earliest years."..

"But, my dear Adela," interrupted Mrs. Somerville, "what young man, before he is twenty, ever studies any thing in the woman he is in love with, but the brightness of her eyes, and the bloom of her complexion? You are talking like a mere visionary; and lest you should frighten our poor widower into leading a cheerless unconnected existence for the remainder of his days, I am heartily glad that he cannot hear you. He is now arrived at an age to make a choice that shall have a little sense in it; and I trust, that his next partner will be as conspicuous for every estimable quality, as his first was deficient in all but outward recommendations. Regard for his children ought now to render him peculiarly circumspect; and if, a second time, he marries a

mere beauty, who would deny his just title to all the misery that may ensue from such folly?"

To this Adela made but little answer; and arriving, shortly after, at the termination of their drive—(a nursery-ground in the King's Road)—Mrs. Somerville indulged the wishes of her children, and alighted to let them run round the garden. Adela kept pace with them, being almost as much exhilarated as they were, to find herself set at liberty amongst flowers and shrubs, and breathing the fresh air of spring, in a place so like the country. Mrs. Somerville remained in the green-house, selecting plants for the decoration of her balcony. When her purchases were completed, she sent a summons to the youthful party, and they all re-entered the carriage, which, with some surprise, Adela heard her sister order to be driven home:—

"Have you forgotten," said she, "your promise to call in Portman-Square?"

"No; but I am by no means upon such a footing of intimacy with Lady Isabella Annesley as to let the children get out at her house; I therefore want to set them

down before we pay this visit, for I hate to leave them by themselves in the carriage, hanging half way out at the window, and talking nonsense with the servants at th door."

"And let me be set down too, my dear Elinor—I never saw Lady Isabella, and certainly shall be of no use in the consultation that is going to be held about her little guests."

Mrs. Somerville, however, took some pains to dissuade her from this design, and at length succeeded; Adela being in reality more desirous to see the children of Lord Ennerdale than she chose to avow.

When, therefore, they had parted with their young companions, the two sisters proceeded to Portman-Square.

CHAP. XIII.

ALARM.

Lady Isabella Annesley was at home, and it was evident had been prepared to expect Mrs. Somerville's visit. She was young, gentle, and delicately fair; and but for the

alloy of a shade of affectation, would have had manners the most irresistibly engaging.

Mrs. Somerville introduced her sister, and conversed for some time on the topics of the day, before she ventured to enquire for the little twins: but just as she was beginning a request to see them, the door opened, and hand in hand, attended by their nurse, they walked gravely into the room. Adela turned hastily to look at them. They were exactly of a height, seemed to be between four and five years old, bore a striking family-resemblance to each other, but, to her utter surprise, were neither of them handsome. The girl was a square-built, sturdy little creature, tanned almost as brown as a gipsy; and the boy, with a complexion totally devoid of colour, had a languor in his whole aspect that denoted the most deplorable degree of indisposition.

"Here are my brother-in-law's children," said Lady Isabella; "he was very anxious that you should see them, Mrs. Somerville. —Poor little souls!" added she, lowering her voice, "I never look at them without pity!"

Mrs. Somerville with the most encoura-

ging gentleness invited them to approach and after a cursory survey of the girl, who seemed to be all health and gaiety, she gazed earnestly and compassionately at the boy, saying—

"What does the physician pronounce to be the matter with him?"

"We are told," said Lady Isabella, "that he has no complaint but general weakness of constitution. Is not his pallid countenance, however, very alarming?"

"I remember hearing it said of you, Adela," cried Mrs. Somerville, "that your face, when you were a child, was so thin it seemed to be all eyes!—Such is exactly the case with this poor little fellow: but those eyes, and the long lashes which fringe them, are wonderfully beautiful."

"I wish it were possible to say as much of his sister's complexion;" observed Lady Isabella. "Mrs. Somerville, do look how insufferably she is tanned. So early in the year, I wonder how she could contrive to find sun enough to get so disfigured."

Mrs. Somerville appeared not to think this a matter of much concern, but addressing the nurse, who still remained in

the room, she asked her how long she had had the care of these children?

"I have lived with them, Ma'am, rather better than a twelvemonth."

"And has this poor little boy been in an ailing state all that time?"

"No, Ma'am; oh, no, I can't say but what he was a fine hearty child till about three or four months ago; and then, he began to droop and to pine, and to lose all his lively spirits, and his appetite and colour, and nobody could tell for why. My Lord came down, as soon as he heard of it, to see him; and he sent for the doctor, who ordered asses milk, and change of air; and so we have never been fixed at one place for more than a fortnight, ever since: but nothing seems to have done him any good, and so we are here now to see what the London doctors can do for him."

Mrs. Somerville, in a guarded manner, asked a few more questions, but forbore making any comment upon the answers she received, and avoided looking at the woman with too scrutinizing an eye. After a short silence, she placed the little invalid, who had been sitting upon her lap, on the

ground; kissed him, and told the nurse that she would not detain her or the children any longer.

The poor boy, looking up timidly in her mild countenance, said, almost in a whisper, "I should like to stay with you, though!"

"Fye, Lord Ossely," cried the nurse, "you must not be troublesome to the lady. Come your ways, and, you too, Lady Harriet."

Mrs. Somerville, though unwilling to irritate the attendant by any species of opposition, interceded quietly in the young suppliant's cause, and supported by Lady Isabella, gained her point; the nurse departing with only the little girl.

When the door was shut, Lady Isabella addressing Mrs. Somerville in French, to avoid alarming the child, said:—

"I fear you think very ill of this poor little fellow's case!"

Tears started into Mrs. Somerville's eyes, and soon rolling down her cheeks, wetted the hands of Lord Ossely, who had again obtained a seat upon her knees, and caused him hastily to raise his head and look at

her: the soft and pitying expression of her face seemed to penetrate him to the heart; —his lips quivered—a faint colour rose in his cheeks—and after a moment's hesitation, he clasped his arms round her neck, and bursting into a passion of tears, sobbed aloud upon her bosom!

Adela, alarmed for her sister, who was within a few weeks of being confined, and whom she was fearful this scene might greatly agitate, started up to snatch the child away; whilst Lady Isabella, amazed at the whole transaction, was upon the point of ringing to summon back the nurse, when Lord Ennerdale entered the room.

"Oh, my dear brother," cried Lady Isabella, "here is poor Algernon almost in hysterics, and Mrs. Somerville weeping over him, and ready to faint!"

"It is but too true!" cried Adela, trembling at her sister's pale countenance, "she will be ill—she looks ready to sink—get her a glass of water, my Lord—and help me, Lady Isabella, I entreat, to disengage her from this child."

Lord Ennerdale flew for the water; and whilst he was gone, the two ladies with very

little difficulty, (for his own emotion had enfeebled him,) drew away the almost insensible and half demolished boy. Adela held him in her arms, and his head sunk upon her shoulder; whilst Mrs. Somerville, making an effort to recover herself, and taking into her own hand the salts which Lady Isabella was holding to her, said anxiously:

"Do not recall that suffering baby's nurse, till I have had some conversation with his father."

Lord Ennerdale re-appeared whilst she was yet speaking; he had brought a glass of water, and a female servant followed him with a bottle of hartshorn.

"I am much better," said Mrs. Somerville, "but I will swallow some of your nauseous medicine, Lord Ennerdale, and we must administer a small quantity to my sister's little patient."

Then lowering her voice, she entreated Lady Isabella to dismiss the maid.

"Shall I take Lord Ossely back to nurse?" enquired the young woman.

"No," answered Mrs. Somerville, "let him have the pleasure of staying to see how perfectly I am recovered."

The girl then retired; and Lord Ennerdale sitting down next to Mrs. Somerville, took her hand, and apprehensively said: —

"I fear it has been too much for your kind and feeling heart, to behold the wan aspect of my poor—perhaps you think, irrecoverable boy!"

"The mere sight of illness," answered she, "though in childhood it is a sight of all others the most affecting, I am not so weak as to be thus disordered by. It is the terrible idea that your son has not had justice done him—that he has been unwittingly committed to the care of a woman who has abused her authority—which so much overcame me. Oh, Lord Ennerdale, open your eyes to distinguish the true source of his malady! I either greatly wrong her, or it rests solely in the temper and disposition of his nurse. Had you seen the ominous scowl with which, even in the presence of so many witnesses, she regarded him when, soothed by our kindness, he whispered his reluctance to depart, it would have made you shudder! He at once fears and hates her; and if she has not caused, she at least

irritates his indisposition, by the agitating feelings which her presence excites."

Lord Ennerdale had been too much horror-struck by these unexpected suggestions, to have the power of interrupting Mrs. Somerville whilst she was speaking, or for some seconds to answer her when she paused. At length, however, with extreme consternation, he exclaimed:

"Have I then, by a thoughtless and misplaced confidence in a mercenary attendant, been guilty of endangering the life of my own child!"

"Ah, where is the father," said Mrs. Somerville, "who might not have been liable to a similar imposition! I thought of my own poor babes whilst contemplating the broken-spirited countenance of your son; and convinced as I am of the tenderness which Mr. Somerville feels for them, the reflection of what might be their fate, were they to lose their mother. . . . "

"Oh, my beloved sister, my own dear Elinor!" interrupted Adela, terrified at such a surmise—"what dark and sinister ideas are you encouraging!"

Mrs. Somerville again raised the harts-

horn and water to her lips, and struggling to disperse the tears that almost blinded her, was able in a few minutes, to resume the discourse with greater firmness.

"This is all very wrong, and very useless," said she, forcing a smile; "but I will now try and talk a little reason. Lord Ennerdale, let me exhort you to lose no time in setting on foot a thorough investigation into this woman's past conduct. Condemn her not definitively at my suggestion. Her countenance may have deceived me, or its evil expression might be the result only of a transient and accidental fit of ill-humour. It seems, indeed, a wrong moment to give indulgence to ungentle passions, when the health of her little charge is in so delicate a state: but, if her moroseness is not habitual, and she has, upon the whole, borne her faculties with meekness, it would be unjust in the highest degree to censure or discharge her in consequence of any prejudice I may have excited against her. However, whilst the matter remains in doubt, remove the poor little boy, my Lord, from under her management. If you approve it, I will with pleasure, take him home with

me this very morning. He shall be attended by the faithful and excellent creature who has the care of my own girls; that very Margaret to whom we are happily indebted for the pleasure of our first introduction to you. She will be delighted to render the slightest service to a child of yours. When all that relates to the disposition of his present nurse is fully elucidated, come to me again, and according to the report you bring me, my little guest shall prolong or terminate his visit."

Touched by a proof of friendship for himself, and consideration for the happiness of his son, so truly generous, Lord Ennerdale most gratefully kissed her hand, saying,

"Dearest Mrs. Somerville, what do I not owe you! I can find no words to express the thankfulness with which you have filled my whole heart. Poor, oppressed, and melancholy little victim!" added he, gently withdrawing the child from Adela's arms, and pressing him to his own bosom, "thou hast found a friend at last—a far better friend than thy credulous and neglectful father!"

Awakened by these caresses from the species of stupor which, by exhausting his strength, he had fallen into, the gratified, but almost doubting boy fixed his large dark eyes upon his father, and in an accent of innocent surprise, said,—

"Do you then love me, papa?"

"Who taught you to doubt my love, Algernon?—Who is it that does not love you?"

"*She* loves me!" cried the child, pointing to Mrs. Somerville, with a smile that was angelic.

"I do indeed, sweet boy!" said that lady, kissing his extended hand, "and your papa, and aunt Isabella, they both love you dearly; and they have thought of a merry little frolic for you, Algernon; they want to know whether you would like for a few days to go home with me, and live with two nice little gentle girls of mine, who will play with you, and be kind to you, and whenever any thing is the matter, will comfort you, and come and tell me—and then, I will comfort you too, and set you upon my knee, and talk to you, and make you quite well and happy."

Rapture flashed from the child's distended eyes, as he eagerly cried out—

"What, go home *alone* with you!"

"Yes, my love; sister Harriet, and nurse must stay with your aunt and papa, for I have not room for so many."

Springing from his father's arms with an impetuosity that admitted no restraint, the acutely-feeling boy rushed towards Mrs. Somerville, and with clasped hands looking up in her face, passionately exclaimed:—

"Oh, how very, very glad I shall be!" but the next minute, a death-like paleness again overspreading his face, he heaved a long and deep sigh, faintly cried out—"oh, my head!" and sunk senseless on the carpet.

Adela flew to her sister, imploring her to quit the room, and Mrs. Somerville, aware of the ill-effects which such reiterated agitation might produce, accepted the arm of her vigilant superintendant, and, as she retired into an adjoining apartment, said to Lady Isabella—

"Only call your own maid to his assistance—do not let the nurse be summoned."

Lord Ennerdale, meanwhile, had raised

the apparently lifeless boy from the floor, and placed him on a sofa, near an open window, whence, as he was turning to seek for the hartshorn, he perceived Mrs. Somerville's carriage waiting at the door, and her footman standing beside it. He instantly directed him to run as expeditiously as possible for the physician who had attended the little boy in the morning—

"If he is out," added the agitated father, "bring an apothecary—a surgeon—any medical man you can find!"

The man, suspecting that perhaps his mistress was ill, disappeared with the speed of an arrow.

Lady Isabella, her maid, and Adela, whom Mrs. Somerville would not permit to remain with her, were by this time all assembled round the child, administering to him every restorative, and making trial of every expedient they could devise, to bring him back to animation. Their united exertions so far succeeded as, at length, to enable him for a few moments to unclose his eyes: but they were dim and vacant; he appeared not to know who was near him, seemed utterly incapable of speaking, and

though he relapsed not again into a fainting-fit, he was reduced to a state of such complete debility, that the short, quick movements of his little chest, when breathing, were the only evidences he gave of remaining existence.

"This is very dreadful!" cried Lady Isabella, turning from the touching image of death, and leaning, bathed in tears, upon her brother-in-law's shoulder—"I can bear to look at him no longer!"

Lord Ennerdale, though almost overpowered himself, supported, and sought to revive her; he led her to a distant part of the room—thanked her for the sensibility she manifested for his poor Algernon: and when he saw her a little more composed, leaving her to the care of her maid, and perceiving Adela still sedulously watchful over his son, he went into the next room to speak to Mrs. Somerville.

"What a scene have I brought you to!" cried he, "Pray Heaven you may be no more than a temporary sufferer by it! But do not now remain in a house of such distress; you may injure yourself, but can do us no good—I question, alas! whether the

united exertions of the world can do any good in a case, I fear, so desperate! I must not, however, give way—and whilst a spark of life remains, I trust I shall *not* give way to unavailing despondency. Your sweet sister is still hovering round my speechless boy: leave her with us a little longer; she will be a support to Isabella, whose nerves are severely shaken. For yourself, let me conduct you to your carriage. I have sent away your footman for a physician: but take one of those belonging to the house,—and Heaven for ever bless and preserve you!"

"Dear Lord Ennerdale," cried the weeping Mrs. Somerville, "I cannot endure to go till the physician comes; but I will not allow myself to approach your boy whilst he continues in a state of insensibility; the sight would utterly subdue me. Yet ask me not to depart till I know whether he is pronounced too ill to bear the removal which I had projected. In that case, you must let me send my worthy Margaret to assist in nursing him; and as this last burst of emotion, on being told that he was about to be separated from his present attendant, seems to confirm my worst suspicions of her, I

think you can hardly be too expeditious in resolving to dismiss her."

"Dismiss her!" repeated he, the deepest indignation kindling in his eyes, "Can you imagine I would ever again suffer her to approach him? She has been his wilful executioner—I, her undesigning accessory!"

He hid his face between his hands, and groaned aloud.

"Be tranquillized, be re-assured," said Mrs. Somerville in a soothing voice—"All hope is not extinct. Your child's disorder rests chiefly, young as he is, upon his mind. Make that easy and fearless, and he may yet be spared to you to become the pride and blessing of your existence. Reproach not yourself so bitterly for the effects of another's guilt. Her trespass is so widely out of the track of common probability—it differs so completely from what one has almost ever heard reported, that however undeniable it now appears, it still seems scarcely within the limits of credibility. So unlike, indeed, is her conduct to any thing which I could naturally have surmised, that had I, as is the case with you, obtained, on first engaging her, respectable attestations of her worth,

and been long habituated to her countenance, any, and every cause under Heaven for the child's indisposition would have suggested itself to me, rather than the unnatural one of an inhuman nurse!"

They were now startled by the sound of a knock at the street door, and Lord Ennerdale flew to the stairs, hoping his messenger was returned with the physician. His eager wishes were not disappointed, and he attended the medical man into the front room.

Dr. R— examined his youthful patient with the strictest and most persevering attention during a considerable time. He seemed much surprised at the state to which he was reduced; and after a variety of other questions, asked whether the child had been assailed by any sudden and extraordinary emotion?

He was answered in the affirmative; and then most positively declared, that he would not, in his present condition, survive the recurrence of any accident of a similar nature.—

"His life," said he, "hangs by a thread —his pulse is scarcely to be felt—his breath

would scarcely stir a feather.—An extinction of the vital powers so nearly total, I have seldom, except after a ravaging fever, witnessed. Put him gently to bed; give him, if he will take it, small quantities of the lightest nourishment—medicine, in his case, is almost out of the question—do not speak to him—do not crowd round him. But if he recovers his perceptions clearly, sooth him, and let him behold none but pleasant and favourite objects. His complaint is upon his nerves—he *may* recover; but to give him any chance, the most assiduous and unremitting attention will be requisite, perhaps for many weeks."

"Dr. R—," said Lord Ennerdale, whilst a blush of ingenuous self-accusation tinged his cheeks, "I will be perfectly unreserved with you. My boy has lost his mother, and not been blessed with a father vigilant or experienced enough to supply that mother's place. He has been consigned to the superintendency of a woman, a fiend rather! whom there is every reason to apprehend has abused the trust. It is but this very day, that a friend to whom I shall hold myself eternally indebted, has opened my eyes

to discern the evil. My defenceless boy has been terrified; perhaps, personally ill-treated, and thence, I solemnly believe, the state to which, for my punishment, you behold him reduced."—

Dr. R— warmly protested he had not the slightest doubt that Lord Ennerdale's friend had struck upon the true cause of the malady.—

"You must discharge the woman immediately, my Lord. Your son is in no situation to bear her sight again. Let somebody be about him whom he loves, and can look up to with trust and pleasure."—

"Do you think he could support the motion of a carriage as far as Cumberland Place? A lady for whom he appears to have conceived a great and sudden prepossession lives there, and has most kindly offered to undertake the charge of him."—

"He had better not be moved at present. Let the lady come to him."

Mrs. Somerville's situation was communicated to him, and the impracticability of such a plan was explained:

"It is unlucky," said the Doctor; "but here is Lady Isabella Annesley, who will

not refuse to shew her fair and benign aspect often at her nephew's bed-side; and you must make interest, my Lord, with as many other pretty young women," glancing his eyes towards Adela, "as you can, to officiate in the capacity of nurses. When you have put the child to bed, give him the draught I shall now write to order for him—and let the house be kept perfectly quiet."

He then took his leave; and Lady Isabella, timid and weak-spirited, went into the adjoining room, to inform Mrs. Somerville of the result of the visit, and to supplicate her, with much earnestness, to leave her sister for that day, at least, in Portman-Square.

"I am wholly unused to the sight of illness," cried she, "and it would almost kill me with terror to be left as the principal directress of this poor infant. Dear Mrs. Somerville, pray intercede for me with Miss Cleveland. Tell her, that I am ashamed to make such a request, yet, that my sole comfort depends upon her granting it. She seems so intelligent and so collected in every thing that she undertakes for the little crea-

ture, that I shall learn confidence from beholding her."

Mrs. Somerville, never very reluctant to place her sister in the way of seeing and conversing with Lord Ennerdale, promised that she would speak to her; and Lady Isabella, full of acknowledgments, went back into the front room to send Adela to her for that purpose.

Meanwhile, Lord Ennerdale had descended into Mr. Annesley's study, and though it was repugnant to him to look at her, had held a short, yet decisive conversation with the nurse. He entered into no discussion with her, but in the most positive terms, forbade her to renew her attendance upon his son; presented her a year's wages, and told her that the sooner she provided herself with another service, the better. The woman expostulated, and almost threatened; but the Earl, sternly threatening in his turn to ring for some of Mr. Annesley's people to remove her from his sight, she hastily gathered up the money, muttered something about sending for her cloaths, and with an aspect of compounded rage, confusion, and

insolence, rushed through the hall, and out of the house in a moment.

This hateful business terminated, Lord Ennerdale, with harassed looks and feelings, was re-ascending the drawing-room stairs, when, upon the landing-place, he met Mrs. Somerville and his little girl.

He related to her what had passed.—

"I rejoice," cried she, "that the wretched woman has so promptly delivered you from her presence—that the painful effort of speaking to her is over. But now, Lord Ennerdale, good morning. I have taken possession of Lady Harriet for a few days, to keep her brother's room as quiet as possible. Adela, with much entreaty, consents to remain, at present, as assistant nurse. You must try and reconcile her to this plan, which she opposed so earnestly, and thinks so officious and absurd, that I could scarcely prevail upon her to listen to it for an instant. Yet Lady Isabella was inexpressibly solicitous to detain her, and I am certain she will be a great comfort to you all. To-morrow I will come and re-demand her. Meanwhile, they are putting Lord Ossely to bed, and I hope I leave every thing

going on as well as could reasonably be expected."

The blessings and acknowledgements which Lord Ennerdale would now have poured forth, were cut short by their being arrived in the hall, where the porter held the door open, and whence Mrs. Somerville saw that the steps of her carriage were already let down. Lord Ennerdale handed her into it, kissed, and placed his little girl beside her, and, with a look full of gratitude, bowed and returned into the house.

END OF VOL. II.

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